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## P R E F A C E.

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"SUNDAY HALF-HOURS WITH THE GREAT PREACHERS," is a collection of fifty-two evangelical Sermons, selected from the writings of the master divines of Christendom, and representing its chief countries, denominations, and ages. It is an attempt to make better known a part of the treasures of Christian literature. Volumes of Sermons by wise and godly pastors exist in profusion. Especially since the Reformation, have appeared many able and brilliant homilies, seeking to

"Justify the ways of God with man,"

which humanity cannot afford to let die. It has been the Editor's aim to collect in one work the most eloquent of these, and thus give the reader a broad outlook over the field of religious truth. The present century, alive with manifestations of Christ-like zeal in the thoughts and deeds of its generations, has also been drafted upon liberally. Thanks are due for the privilege of using copyright-matter of much value, as well as for occasional favors of manuscript contributions; for all these instances of courtesy acknowledgments are elsewhere made. From the abundant material thus within control, the Editor has sought to give the public the best—or most edifying—Sermon of each peculiarly representative Preacher, and to embrace them all within the compass of a year's Sabbath reading. This needful limitation of plan has compelled the exclusion of many gifted names, well worthy a place within these pages; for how could the number of fifty-two exhaust the foremost apostolic heroes who have warred for Christ during nineteen centuries! Yet, with scarcely an exception, the ministers chosen are revered by the whole or a part of the Christian Church.



Throughout, the Editor has sought to act with the catholic charity befitting a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sectarian bias and denominational prejudices are now, most happily, little favored by Christian brethren, who love to unite in acknowledging and following the one great Captain of our Salvation. Yet this charity has not been herein favored at the expense of evangelic truth. Each branch of the Church of Christ has been as fairly represented as its literature demanded. Wherever practicable, each Sermon is a verbatim reprint from the standard edition of each author's works, thus preserving the individuality of punctuation, capitals, etc. An exception has been made to this rule by substituting modern usage in place of antiquated spelling, and by modifying the inordinate use of capitals in the case of *Who* and *Himself*, when applied to the Deity. Never has the slightest liberty been taken to prune or expunge any sentiment expressed, as such action would have been a gross violation of personal rights; yet several times, because of extreme length, slight omissions have been made of matter local in interest, or otherwise irrelevant. The concise biographical notices prefixed are designed to exhibit the personality of each divine, and show his special labors for mankind. They afford the opportunity of presenting some of the choicest Christian works to the attention of the reader. In the Index is given an analysis of each Sermon, together with an alphabetic arrangement of the leading thoughts, thus affording means of easy reference to these varied contents.

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# SUNDAY HALF-HOURS

WITH

## THE GREAT PREACHERS.

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### I.

#### THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST.

D'AUBIGNÉ.

[JEAN HENRI MERLE D'AUBIGNÉ, D.D., comes from a French Huguenot stock, that accounted life well spent in upholding evangelical religion. His great-grandfather had to fly to Geneva at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and his grandfather was exiled to the same city in old age. Here Jean was born, August 16th 1794. His theological studies, commenced at Geneva, were completed at Berlin, under the celebrated Neander. After a pastorate in Hamburg, and later in Brussels as chaplain to King William, he returned to Geneva in 1830. At once he was appointed president of its new theological seminary, and vice-president of the Evangelical Society. His great work is, "History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century," in the times of Luther and Calvin, of which nearly a half million copies have been sold. It is an eloquent, pious, and impartial portraiture of those thrilling times. His appearance is noble and commanding; his vivacity keen, and energy exhaustless. He died in Geneva, October 21st 1872. The following Sermon was preached by him on a Good Friday.]

*"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."*—Gal. vi. 14.

My brethren, God has not intended that men should be deprived of all boasting. A disposition to boast is one of the propensities most peculiar to our nature, and which we

find in all classes of society and among all varieties of the human race. From him who stands on the highest elevation in the world down to the most unknown; from the inhabitant of our cities, whose spirit towers on high, down to the very savage, whose reason is scarcely observable; all find something of which they believe that they may boast.—And what is it then?—A ridiculous plaything, of which they should blush, instead of making it the object of their pride. Oh! sad spectacle of our vanity, which proves with the greatest precision that the human race has lost that in which it could glory, that it has come short of the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23); and that in this great need it stretches out its hand to the first plaything that it finds to put it in the place of the reality which it wants. Thus the inhabitant of a city in the utmost state of famine seizes with desire the loathsome food, from the very sight of which at another time all his senses would have revolted.

God would give men an object in which they could better glory. He has given them the cross of Jesus Christ.

“God forbid that I should glory,” says St. Paul in our text, “save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And through these words he pronounces the sentence of condemnation against all deceitful things, which are in general our idols; he commands all men to cease from their vain endeavors, and he exalts the cross of Jesus Christ, as the only object worth glorying in for all intelligent beings till the end of time. But when the apostle says *in the cross of Christ*, think not that he understands thereby the wood, the outward sign, the figure with which one meets so frequently in many regions of Christendom, and which has been so often abused by superstition. He intends to denote thereby the death of the Son of God, which took place when the fullness of the time was come for the remission of our sins. But he uses the expression *the cross* only to remind us that this kind of death was held as accursed among all people,

that the death in which we ought to glory was full of humiliation, shame, and ignominy, and even accursed of God. (Gal. iii. 13).

See then here, my brethren, the *glorying* which God your Creator allows you, and which He himself would give you. The day which we now commemorate is the only ground of greatness which can be within the reach of the human race. Never would man have been really able to glory if the hill of Calvary had not 1800 years ago displayed the spectacle which we see on it; if man had not there crucified this Jesus, who had previously been sent by Pilate to Herod and by Herod to Pilate; if he had not been there suspended on the tree, "a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Ps. xxii. 6); and if the terrible sentence had not fallen on the only innocent head that ever lived on earth. This is the day on which the great contest was engaged in, on which the great deed was finished which won for us honor and immortality. This is the day on which our eternal nobility was registered in the book of life.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let the present meditation be devoted to the examination of this new object of glorying.

There are two opinions concerning this object: one is the apostle's; we will support it. The other is the world's; we will refute it. Or, we will first state the dignity of the cross of Christ, and then test our feelings thereby. When we have defended the truth and combated error, our work is done.

And do Thou, Lord our God, what Thou hast to do! Give the beginning and the end, and thus all. Show us how in the cross of Jesus Christ there is hidden all the wisdom of God and all the power of God! Amen.

#### I. THE OPINION OF THE APOSTLE.

The Apostle of the Gentiles proclaims, as we have seen, the cross of Jesus Christ as the only object of his boasting. And

the first reason which moved him to do so is certainly this, that he sees in the cross the mind and glory of God developed in their full splendor. St. Paul had learnt to know God in his early years; but the zeal which impelled him before his conversion so violently to persecute the disciples of the Nazarene, shows sufficiently of what nature this knowledge was. The cross of Jesus Christ had now been revealed to him, and it made him acquainted with a God of whom he had learnt nothing in the school of Gamaliel, and he boasts of that to which he owed this wonderful knowledge. Yes, this cross is the only teacher which reveals to us the living God. If we even exhaust our knowledge, we shall not truly know God if the cross of Jesus Christ have given us no instruction. Without it even nature and conscience speak in dark sayings, and what is most important for us to know remains veiled from our eyes. Where will you come to the knowledge of God's *holiness*, His unutterable abhorrence of sin, which gives you such earnest warnings? Conscience says something to you; but if you would have quite a different idea of it, come to the cross of Jesus Christ—see him in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, fastened to the cross *on account of sin*, and because unrighteousness dwells on the earth. Will you then still retain unsettled views of the holiness of God? Will you still doubt whether God has given the world a telling proof of his holiness?

Where will you arrive at the knowledge of God's *love*, this infinite mercy which should be the ground of all your joy? Nature will teach you something here also; but if you would hear this subject spoken of with power, concerning which nature seems only to stammer, hasten to the cross of Jesus Christ; see the well-beloved Son of the Father humble himself unto death, even the death of the cross, that the world might have life. Is that not a deed of love? "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perad

venture for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 7, 8).

Where will you discover the *glory* of God? What is the place, O my Lord and my God! where I can find Thee in all Thy glory? Shall I seek Thee in the midst of the worlds which Thou hast formed, or in an inaccessible light, surrounded afar off by all the angels bowing their heads to the ground? I can find no spot in the whole universe which would answer to Thy glory. Everything is so little in comparison with Thee, everything is so small side by side with Thy infinity! But no; I know a spot which answers to all Thy glory, and this is an accursed tree, on which Thou art fastened. There I recognise Thee in all thy sublimity, much more than when surrounded by those thousands of thousands who form the guard of Thy throne. (Dan. vii. 10.) All these ideas of angels, archangels, and cherubim, which bow their heads before Thee are but slight representations, borrowed from what man calls greatness; but O Thou who wast fastened on a cross for our sin! Thy glory is infinite. I see therein not even the slightest human feature; Thou hast there a splendor altogether peculiar to Thee; Thou appearest in a thoroughly divine light. Oh! I envy not the angels and archangels who declare to Thee their unworthiness when Thou sittest on Thy heavenly throne. To *us men* is it given to worship Thee on a far more glorious throne—Thy cross. They forsook the heavens when thou wast fastened on the cross, because the earth presented to them a spectacle which had never been seen in heaven. Only and solely at the foot of this cross will I linger, recognising Thee, and making my boast—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But St. Paul glories in the cross of Christ not only because it reveals to him the glory of God, but also *because it causes him to see his own wretchedness*. What must man's

state be, when *such* a deed has to be accomplished in order to free him from it? Certainly there are voices enough as well outside of us as in us to remind us of our nothingness; but how skilfully we can reason away their decisions and withdraw ourselves from their judgments! In what a deceitful righteousness does man wrap himself up as long as the cross of Christ is a strange thing to him; on what a height he places himself until the cross abases him! The cross of Jesus Christ is the great writing of accusation which God hath set forth before the eyes of the whole earth. No one can fix his eyes on it without being at the same moment convinced. It is truly foolishness for a man to believe himself still guiltless, since the Son of God was offered up for his sin. Come, my brethren, for the cross of Jesus Christ shows you the wounds of your soul; it reveals to you your entire desert of condemnation, teaches you the entire extent of your sin, and extinguishes in you the very last spark of pride.

O thou who thinkest thou dost still possess so great worthiness in the sight of God, come, in order to have this idea destroyed, to the cross of Christ; come there in order to be able to know thine own deserts; the Son of God was obliged to shed His blood there in order to save thee from death. O thou who boastest in thy virtues, come and consider them a little in the light of this Cross, there they will pale away, there they will become obscured, and thou wilt find them all infected with a selfishness and with a pride which make them objects of the divine abhorrence. Let even the most excellent of men approach; I place him at the foot of that cross which was erected even for his salvation, and what will then become of his pride? The cross breaks in pieces this deceitful glass through which we look upon ourselves as greater than we are; it annihilates us. And why then does St. Paul glory in it? Because he knows that in his state *the sense of his wretchedness* is his highest dignity. And to

us, my brethren, it is not allowed to have another boast than that of the Apostle; none of us will be great before God if we have not felt our own nothingness before Him. Oh! blessed be this cross which has assigned us our right place, and which causes us to find in the feeling of our nothingness the commencement of our glory.

But when Paul glories in the cross of Christ because it had hurled him down from his vain greatness, he boasts also chiefly of it *because it raises him to true greatness*. The great object of his glorying is that such a price has been paid for the salvation of his soul, that the Son of God died even for the sin which he committed, that the blood shed on the cross made a full atonement for all his guilt, and procured for him immortality. And what, my dear hearer, is thy glory if not the forgiveness of sins? How wouldst thou lift up thy head if ONE had not died for thee, if *He* who died for thee were not He who made all things, and who preserves all things by the word of his power (2 Cor. v. 14; John i. 3; Col. i. 16, 17; Heb. i. 2, 3, 10). Thou exertest thyself to draw glory and honor out of the smallest offering which a dying man brings to thee, and out of the smallest trouble which he puts himself to on thy account; and wilt thou not glory in this, that the Lord of all things, having appeared in flesh, has shed His blood on the cross for thee? It was not on account of His own sins that He was pierced, for "I find no fault in Him," said even His judge. (John xix. 4.) The power of men was not the cause of His death; for could He not have prayed His Father to send Him more than twelve legions of angels? (Matt. xxvi. 53.) Why was He then fastened on the cross? It was necessary *on thy account*, my dear brother: this is the only way of accounting for it that is left to us.

Yes, the only cause which slew the Son of the living God on the cross was the love which He had for thy soul, the determination which He had formed to save thee. If He



carried out his intention, if pain did not cause Him to waver, if He did not shun the terrible hour: it was all in order to save thy soul. If He shed all His blood for thee, if He had to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" if He endured an anguish of heart, which far exceeds our ideas: the only cause was the salvation of thy soul. If He fought out on the cross a great conflict, if He overcame sin, the world, death, and hell: He did it to win thy soul.

*He died—all is accomplished.* He has cancelled with His own blood the debt which thou couldst never have paid; thou art reconciled; thy offences are taken away; He is now, for all them that obey Him, the *Author of eternal salvation*. (Heb. v. 9.) O wonderful death of the only Son of the Father! An event which will ever be unique in the history of the world! Unsearchable depth of Deity, before which the angels bow their heads to the earth, without being able to sound its depths! And shouldst thou, my brother, for whom this took place, shouldst thou be the only one whom it did not move? Shouldst thou alone draw no glory from it? What more wonderful event than this could proceed from heaven to earth? At what price wouldst thou be redeemed if this, which has been paid, does not suffice for thee? How high dost thou place thyself if thou slightest the blood of the world's King? What kind of a gift wouldst thou receive if an eternity of glory has so little value for thee? Oh! when thou wilt stand before the judgment-seat of God, and when the eye of the Judge will examine the transgression of thy soul, oh! what will be then thy hope? What will be then thy glory? What can then calm thy heart if thou canst not then say, in presence of the Judge and of all those who stand before Him: "Christ died for my sins." (1 Cor. xv. 3.) Yes, my brethren, only the unbeliever can fix his eye on this cross without finding there his glory, because it has, indeed, none for him; but the believer discovers therein an infinite glory. My Lord and Saviour, it is truly so,

the lower Thy cross is, the more we glory in it; for what must that dignity be which is shown to us through such an humbling, what must that glory be which is promised to us by such an abasement?

But observe especially the ground which the Apostle himself presents: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*" That is, indeed, an exceedingly great advantage which the cross of Jesus Christ bestows; for therein consists the great wretchedness of man, that he cannot free himself from the present world, to become a citizen of the future one; and the cross of Jesus Christ works this miracle. It crucifies man to the world, and the world to man. What an expression of power! It crucifies you to the world, that is, it crucifies the sin in you which causes you to live for the world. Should you not hate sin, knowing that Christ died on account of sin? Will you not fight against all the motions which it begets in your heart? Yes, the Redeemer's death is the only means of infusing into us a lively hatred of our sinful nature. It is the only medicine for our wounds. But what is still more, the cross of Jesus Christ will crucify the world to you; that is, it will annihilate all allurements to the vanities of the world. You cannot love Christ and the world at the same time. What can the pageantry of the present world be worth to him for whom the Cross of Christ has won all the treasures of the world to come? Will he not hate the world violently; for if sin was the cause of his Redeemer's death, the world with its passions and excesses was the instrument! The cross crucifying man to this world makes him a citizen of the world to come; killing in him the old man of this earth, it forms the new man which is of heaven. Where Christ is, there is also his treasure and his heart; he is *risen with Christ*. (Col. iii. 1.) In this manner the cross works the great change which man needed, and makes him,

whom it found in the dust, a citizen of heaven. In this manner the cross accomplishes through its power what no law or human wisdom could perform. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

But the last motive which moved St. Paul, as he travelled through Asia, Greece, and Italy, and passed over all seas, to cry out that he desired to glory in nothing else, was certainly *the thought of the power of this cross and the triumphs which await it*. This great apostle knew that it is sufficient to bestow immortality even on those who have already sunk into the deepest abyss. He knew what a large number it had already redeemed, as well in the cities of Galatia to which he wrote, as those in Greece, and at Rome, and Jerusalem. He knew the future destiny of the cross; that kings and people would come and cast themselves down before it; that the nations would bring their sons in their arms; and that all the ends of the earth would become its inheritance. (Is. xlix. 22.) And we can see that in part fulfilled, which the apostle could only foreknow. This unknown cross has raised itself from Calvary, and rules already over half of the earth. The prediction of Him who was fastened on it has not ceased to be fulfilled: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) How many millions of souls in so many centuries have fixed their gaze upon it, as the Israelites of old did on the brazen serpent, and been saved (Num. xxi. 5-9); what a great multitude, won out of the kingdom of darkness, celebrate now, before the throne, the salvation that has come to them through the Lamb! (Rev. vii. 9, 10.) All old things have passed away, and everything has become new. A new breath of life has floated around this orb for 1800 years. The cross of Jesus Christ has already conquered multitudes of adversaries: slavery, barbarism, and effeminacy have been obliged to give way before it; for in saving individuals it becomes the true power of

nations. It accomplishes in its progress the redemption of the world; the powers of darkness fly before it, and let go their hold of us; at the same time, struggling with superstition which is bent on putting human wretchedness in its place or close by it, and with unbelief which is bent on annihilating it, and which would make men believe that heaven has not opened to save the earth; struggling with these, it directs its blows right and left against those abominable enemies. Not content with extending its old conquests, it hastens through the midst of the heavens to carry on the work of regeneration. It is the standard which the Lord of hosts set up to the people. (Is. xlix. 22.) Its victories multiply; it assembles men from all sides, whose dispersion was caused by their sins; and we, trusting on its almighty power, can espy the time when it will be said: Now is the whole world our God's and his Christ's. Oh! God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the world tread thee even under its feet, thou art nevertheless that by which it is saved. A drop of Thy blood, O Lord, is more precious to us than all the riches of the universe.

## II. THE OPINION OF THE WORLD.

Is this your language, my brethren? If that is the opinion of St. Paul, what is yours? There is scarcely a truth which could have more opponents in the world than this, about which our text speaks to us. How many are there who practically say, I glory in all other things than in the Cross of Jesus Christ. Are ye of this number? Oh, that your conscience testified to you on this day, the day of triumph for the cross, that you yourselves, since you entered this sacred house, and commenced to lend me your attention, have neither in your understanding nor in your heart cherished feelings or thoughts which are opposed to those of St. Paul.

Perhaps you say:—Is it then necessary, to think so much

about this cross? There are so many other objects in religion which are much more important than this! More important than the cross? I could here point you back to what I have just now said, but I prefer to refute you by means of yourself. You would set the cross aside as a thing of small account, and yet you say almost at the same moment this cross, this atoning death of the only begotten Son of God is incomprehensible, and our reason is thereby brought to nought. How are such opinions to be reconciled? How can the cross be considered at the same time so insignificant and yet so wonderful? If it thus surpasses your ideas, whence comes the low value which you assign to it? This must be made clear to you. The cross of the Son of God cannot exist and yet be insignificant; it is either credible or a lie. If it is deserving of credit and true, it is the greatest thing in the world, and you must come and recognise it, and in spirit bow before it. If it is false and a lie, you must declare it to be the greatest of all cheats, with all our sacred books which proclaim it, and with the whole of Christianity of which it is the substance. You must, like the first apostates of the Church, trample it under your feet, and then swear by the gods of the world. One of the two the cross must be to you, either divine wisdom or hellish lies. It must either be your ruin or your salvation. There is no middle way: you cannot be indifferent about it.

But that is just what holds us back from it, you will say. If the cross is true, all other things fall at once, and we can then seek our glory only in Him. But is it true? Is it true that the Son of God shed his blood on the tree to procure for us eternal life? Yes, my brethren, and the witness which should convince us is God himself, who is the truth, and who, through His apostle (Eph. ii. 16), declares that Jesus Christ reconciled both in one body by the cross. But without seeking testimony in heaven, will not the earth itself suffice for us? Call back to remembrance the greatest

deeds of antiquity, there is no longer any trace of them in existence, and only the old historical books which relate them to us bear testimony that they have taken place. But it is not so with the atoning death of Christ: this event lives in the world. The present condition of the earth gives evidence of it. From the blood which flowed down from the height of the cross, all the nations have proceeded which have exalted this holy banner upon the earth which they rule. Everything in these nations speaks to you of the cross. Yes, the cross of Christ is beyond your reach, you cannot shatter it. This truth, on which eighteen centuries rest, cannot so easily be set aside, as if it were a short-lived dogma, which has been formed in the brain of him who preaches it. Opposed in all ages, and by all the power of men, it has nevertheless permeated all times without having been cast down. It has expressed itself by its own power, both against unbelief and against superstition. And this fact of an offering which once was finished for the sin of all is ever present in the world, and proclaimed as the greatest act of love to men.

But could such an act have taken place? What astonishment does this doctrine cause us! What can we especially discover in it, if it is not foolishness? My brethren, let us not ask whether such a deed could have been completed when we know that it did take place. To investigate whether what has actually happened could have taken place is a ridiculous play of men of reason; and those must keep silence when the cross of the Son of God is spoken of. You are astonished, you say. But according to what rules, then, should the plummet of your understanding search the depths of Deity? If God, in giving life to a plant, does something which surprises us, should we think that when He reconciles the world to Himself He should do nothing astonishing? Man is astounded at it, because he has never had an idea anything like it. In fine, know that God in this

matter thinks as you do, and that he calls the cross *foolishness*. (1 Cor. i. 21.) But should we not learn from this that if we dare to contend with Him, what we called *wisdom* would be proved *foolishness*, and what we considered foolishness would be declared wisdom. A little of the foolishness of the cross is sufficient to put to shame all our philosophy. This cross, which alone reveals all God's attributes, and alone satisfies all man's wants, is the real *sum of the wisdom of the world*. All buildings of human pride are thereby one after another annihilated. It has already rendered many defenceless, and will not cease to disarm others. He who is a stranger to it is mistaken, for a time will come when he will be astonished to have passed it by without paying attention to it; and when Christ, having spoiled the principalities and powers of human wisdom, which still rule in the present century, and having made a show of them openly, will triumph over them himself in this cross. (Col. ii. 15.)

But if this cross of Christ is not now your glory and your wisdom, what are you then? To what religion do you then belong? Are you Christians? Christians without the cross! What a new Christianity is that, in what school is it taught? Verily, you can even learn from unbelievers what you do not seem to know. Go to the children of Israel, make your way to a follower of the false prophet; ask one of them what the Christianity is which you profess. Certainly he who does not believe, but for that very reason is free from prejudice, will tell you. He will say that Christians are a people who recognise Jesus of Nazareth born at Bethlehem as the only begotten Son of God, and believe that the death which He suffered under Pontius Pilate is the sacrifice which reconciles the sinful and rebellious human race to God! Do you then not know your religion even so well as those who live without it? They abuse this cross of Jesus, they who do not pretend to believe

in it; and you who publicly confess it, you are ashamed of it, like them! Not to glory in the cross, is not to belong to the Christian church. We see in every century all those who have followed the steps of St. Paul, and whose names are noted down in the Book of Life, glorying in the cross. In it the heroes of the Reformation especially gloried, whom we honor as our fathers in the faith. God keep you from being able to turn away from their example, and from glorying in anything else than in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Ah, my brethren, shall we say why you do not glory in it alone? *Because you believe that you do not need it.* And that is just the last point to which everything comes back. We seize with joy a help which we consider necessary, but we despise it as soon as we believe that it is unnecessary. The cross of Jesus Christ professes to be what alone can give eternal salvation; but you believe you are able to secure it through yourself. The cross of Jesus Christ professes to be what alone can give holiness; but you imagine you are able to attain to it of yourself. What have you then still to do with it? If you reject it, that appears to me intelligible. The question is just this, Which is right, the cross of Jesus Christ which places salvation in itself, or you who seek it in yourself? This is the question which, if not soon decided in your case, *that day* will answer which will determine and reveal all things.

But you say, perhaps, and certainly there are many who can say it: "I deny not the cross of Christ." Quite true, you believe it, but only the half of it. You deny not the event, but you shun it. You venture not with a full and free faith to persuade yourself that the Son of God was fastened on the tree for you; and hence it comes that, in respect of influence on your heart, this event is nothing. Ah, cast far away from you this littleness of faith, give up this half Christianity which precipitates you into destruc-



tion. All Christianity in which the central point is not the crucified Messiah, to whom everything runs, and from whom everything proceeds, is a false Christianity. Why will you not believe as St. Paul believed? The cross of Jesus Christ is just as nigh to you as it was to him. I offer you the Christ who was crucified for you, just as St. Peter offered Him to those who had fastened him on the cross. (Acts iii. 26). His blood is before your eyes as it was before theirs; you can wash yourself therein from your misdeeds just as clean as they could. Oh, what day calls you to this, if the present does not? What moment would you choose, if not this solemn moment when the Son of God was slain on Golgotha for you?

Yea, Lord and Saviour! I raise myself this hour and approach Thy cross! Thou didst bring there an offering for me; I come and bring mine to Thee. I come, Lord, and strip myself of everything, and declare to Thee that there is nothing in the world of which I boast but only the cross, on which I see Thee fastened. At Thy feet I cast all my pretended greatness; Thy cross eclipses and annihilates it. I offer up to Thee all in which I have heretofore gloried. I tread my righteousness under my feet; because I know that what I called my righteousness was nothing but unrighteousness. I tread my holiness under my feet; because I know that what I called holiness was nothing but shame. I tread my meritorious works under my feet; because I know that among them there is not *one* to be found pure, and that those things by which I believed life could be merited deserve for me only condemnation. There remains for me nothing, O Lord! See me here as Thou wilt have me, see me in the dust, see me wretched, poor, blind, and naked before Thee. Give me Thy gold, purified in the fire, that I may be rich! Give me the white robes of Thy righteousness, that I may clothe myself, and that the shame of my nakedness may not appear. (Rev. iii. 17, 18.) Oh!

Thy cross gives me again all that I have lost, and in a quite different degree. For me, my Lord! for me Thou wast fastened on the cross. Thy blood, which Thou didst shed, is my peace; I wash myself therein diligently from all spots; it atones before my Judge for all my offences; it brings me nearer to Him again; it unites me with Him afresh; it speaks better than the blood of Abel. (Heb. xii. 24.) Thy cross becomes my wisdom, my righteousness, my holiness, my redemption. Behold, I am now rich, Lord! I have found this ground of glorying which will open to me the gates of heaven and set me upon an eternal throne. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ah! how do all these bonds of unbelief now discover themselves to us which century after century have poured out their blasphemies against the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! We fear them in no wise. We repeat it, to them: it is this cross, this crucified Lord, that we worship, and in whom we glory. Ah! wretched and proud world! Ah! wisdom, greatness, and folly of this time! We know that at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ thy reproach awaits us! But, clothed with this reproach, we despise thy glory, we make a mock of thy splendor, and point with the finger at thy greatness. We esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. (Heb. xi. 26.) Every word of thy reproach is a title of honor to our glory, and crushing under our feet everything that can produce thy pride, we still repeat with the apostle: "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

I have yet only a word to say to you: *Abide by this cross.* You have responded to our voice, you have come and placed yourselves at the foot of the cross of Christ; give thanks to him who has led you there; but this is still not enough, you must not in future leave it; nothing in the world should be able to separate you from it.

Abide by this cross. Lament there the time of your ignorance; regret with a bitter pain every moment that you have lost through not discovering its power and glory. And having lived so many years in the world without it and without God, repeat, in the enjoyment of a present salvation, these words of one of His old servants: "I have too late come to a knowledge of Thee, I have too late come to love Thee." (*Augustine.*)

Abide by this cross, because you find there true greatness; sacrifice there all false glory; sacrifice there with joy this pride, which is infused into you by the superiority of your mind, or the knowledge which distinguishes you, or your envied reputation in society, or your worldly calling, or the riches that you are in possession of, or your course of life which exalts you above others, or the admiration which surrounds you, this splendor which is extended over you, or by the ridiculous praises which are presented to you. How can I reckon up all the sources of this childish pride which you have to sacrifice before the cross?

Abide by this cross. Abide there in your trials. Take comfort; the cross has rescued you, salvation is procured for you, eternal life awaits you; not even all the storms of life united can sadden the peace which has been won for you. Yes, the view of the punishment which fell upon the Holy and Righteous One in your stead, will cause you to find the burden which you bear light. Rejoice to be led on the way of pain which led Jesus to glory.

Abide by this cross. And when sin is again stirred up in your flesh, when the world begins to entice you, and the fiend to spread his nets, when your soul has begun to reel like a drunken man, then consider Jesus, in order that the view of what he suffered for your sins may fill your soul with a holy horror of them, and kindle again in your heart the extinguished flames of love.

Abide by this cross. And even should everything unite against it, yea, should men afresh surround it, blaspheming and shaking their heads (Matt. xxvii. 39); then be this your glory, boldly to confess this cross before all; "For whosoever shall confess Me before men," saith the Lord, "him will I confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. x. 32, 33.) The day will come when the veil which still covers it will be entirely removed, and when its light and its glory will stream forth upon every one who has not been ashamed of it.

May God give us grace to be confessors of the cross of Christ in our lives. May God give us grace to become confessors of the cross of Christ in our death. "I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life," saith the Lord. (Rev. iii. 5.) Amen.

## II.

### ALIVE IN GOD.

ARNOLD.

[THOMAS ARNOLD, D. D., the noble schoolmaster of Rugby for fourteen years, was born at Cowes, June 13th 1795. He was educated at Oxford, ordained in the Church of England in 1828, and died June 12th 1842. His character was marked by rare manliness, Christian sympathy, and profound scholarship. How he taught his pupils to love him, is well told in "Tom Brown's School-Days at Rugby." Besides his classical works, he left five volumes of Sermons. Our extract is taken from "Christian Life." His thoughts are pure, vigorous, and independent.]

*"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."*—Matt. xxii. 32.

WE hear these words as a part of our Lord's answer to the Sadducees; and, as their question was put in evident profaneness, and the answer to it is one which to our minds is quite obvious and natural, so we are apt to think that in this particular story there is less than usual that particularly concerns us. But it so happens, that our Lord, in answering the Sadducees, has brought in one of the most universal and most solemn of all truths,—which is indeed implied in many parts of the Old Testament, but which the Gospel has revealed to us in all its fullness,—the truth contained in the words of the text, that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

I would wish to unfold a little what is contained in these words, which we often hear even, perhaps, without quite understanding them; and many times oftener without fully entering into them. And we may take them, first, in their

surely live," and "He shall surely die." We have no right to refer these to a mere extension, on the one hand, or a cutting short, on the other, of the term of earthly existence. The promise of living long in the land, or, as in Hezekiah's case, of adding to his days fifteen years, is very different from the full and unreserved blessing, "Thou shalt surely live." And we know, undoubtedly, that both the good and the bad to whom Ezekiel spoke, died alike the natural death of the body. But the peculiar force of the promise, and of the threat, was, in the one case, Thou shalt belong to God; in the other, Thou shalt cease to belong to him; although the veil was not yet drawn up which concealed the full import of those terms, "belonging to God," and "ceasing to belong to him:" nay, can we venture to affirm that it is fully drawn aside even now?

I have dwelt on this at some length, because it really seems to place the common state of the minds of too many amongst us in a light which is exceedingly awful; for if it be true, as I think the Scripture implies, that to be dead, and to be without God, are precisely the same thing, then can it be denied, that the symptoms of death are strongly marked upon many of us? Are there not many who never think of God, or care about his service? Are there not many who live, to all appearance, as unconscious of his existence as we fancy the inferior animals to be? And is it not quite clear, that to such persons, God cannot be said to be their God? He may be the God of heaven and earth, the God of the universe, the God of Christ's church; but he is not their God, for they feel to have nothing at all to do with him; and, therefore, as he is not their God, they are, and must be, according to the Scripture, reckoned among the dead.

But God is the God "of the living." That is, as before, all who are alive, live unto him; all who live unto him, are alive. "God said, I am the God of Abraham, and the God

of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ;" and, therefore, says our Lord, " Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, are not and cannot be dead." They cannot be dead, because God owns them : he is not ashamed to be called their God ; therefore, they are not cast out from him ; therefore, by necessity, they live. Wonderful, indeed, is the truth here implied, in exact agreement, as we have seen, with the general language of Scripture ; that, as she who but touched the hem of Christ's garment was, in a moment, relieved from her infirmity, so great was the virtue which went out from him ; so they who are not cast out from God, but have anything whatever to do with him, feel the virtue of his gracious presence penetrating their whole nature ; because he lives, they must live also.

Behold, then, life and death set before us ; not remote (if a few years be, indeed, to be called remote), but even now present before us ; even now suffered or enjoyed. Even now, we are alive unto God, or dead unto God ; and, as we are either the one or the other, so we are, in the highest possible sense of the terms, alive or dead. In the highest possible sense of the terms ; but who can tell what that highest possible sense of the terms is ? So much has, indeed, been revealed to us, that we know now that death means a conscious and perpetual death, as life means a conscious and perpetual life. But greatly, indeed, do we deceive ourselves, if we fancy that, by having thus much told us, we have also risen to the infinite heights, or descended to the infinite depths, contained in those little words, life and death. They are far higher, and far deeper, than ever thought or fancy of man has reached to. But, even on the first edge of either, at the visible beginnings of that infinite ascent or descent, there is surely something which may give us a foretaste of what is beyond. Even to us in this mortal state, even to you advanced but so short a way on your very earthly journey,

life and death have a meaning: to be dead unto God, or to be alive to him, are things perceptibly different.

For, let me ask of those who think least of God, who are most separate from him, and most without him, whether there is not now actually, perceptibly, in their state, something of the coldness, the loneliness, the fearfulness of death? I do not ask them whether they are made unhappy by the fear of God's anger; of course they are not: for they who fear God are not dead to him, nor he to them. The thought of him gives them no disquiet at all; this is the very point we start from. But I would ask them whether they know what is to feel God's blessing. For instance: we all of us have our troubles of some sort or other, our disappointments, if not our sorrows. In these troubles, in these disappointments,—I care not how small they may be,—have they known what it is to feel that God's hand is over them; that these little annoyances are but his fatherly correction; that he is all the time loving us, and supporting us? In seasons of joy, such as they taste very often, have they known what it is to feel that they are tasting the kindness of their heavenly Father, that their good things come from his hand, and are but an infinitely slight foretaste of his love? Sickness, danger,—I know that they come to many of us but rarely; but if we have known them, or at least sickness, even in its lighter form, if not in its graver,—have we felt what it is to know that we are in our Father's hands, that he is with us, and will be with us to the end; that nothing can hurt those whom he loves? Surely, then, if we have never tasted anything of this: if in trouble, or in joy, or in sickness, we are left wholly to ourselves, to bear as we can, and enjoy as we can; if there is no voice that ever speaks out of the heights and the depths around us, to give any answer to our own; if we are thus left to ourselves in this vast world,—there is in this a coldness and a loneliness; and whenever we come to be, of necessity, driven to



be with our own hearts alone, the coldness and the loneliness must be felt. But consider that the things which we see around us cannot remain with us, nor we with them. The coldness and loneliness of the world, without God, must be felt more and more as life wears on: in every change of our own state, in every separation from or loss of a friend, in every more sensible weakness of our own bodies, in every additional experience of the uncertainty of our own counsels, —the deathlike feeling will come upon us more and more strongly: we shall gain more of that fearful knowledge which tells us that "God is not the God of the dead."

And so, also, the blessed knowledge that he is the God "of the living" grows upon those who are truly alive. Surely he "is not far from every one of us." No occasion of life fails to remind those who live unto him, that he is their God, and that they are his children. On light occasions or on grave ones, in sorrow and in joy, still the warmth of his love is spread, as it were, all through the atmosphere of their lives: they for ever feel his blessing. And if it fills them with joy unspeakable even now, when they so often feel how little they deserve it; if they delight still in being with God, and in living to him, let them be sure that they have in themselves the unerring witness of life eternal:—God is the God of the living, and all who are with him must live.

Hard it is, I well know, to bring this home, in any degree, to the minds of those who are dead: for it is of the very nature of the dead that they can hear no words of life. But it has happened that, even whilst writing what I have just been uttering to you, the news reached me that one, who two months ago was one of your number, who this very half-year has shared in all the business and amusements of this place, is passed already into that state where the meanings of the terms life and death are become fully revealed. He knows what it is to live unto God, and what it is to die to him. Those things which are to us unfathomable mysteries,

are to him all plain: and yet but two months ago he might have thought himself as far from attaining this knowledge as any of us can do. Wherefore it is clear, that these things, life and death, may hurry their lesson upon us sooner than we deem of, sooner than we are prepared to receive it. And that were indeed awful, if, being dead to God, and yet little feeling it, because of the enjoyments of our worldly life, those enjoyments were on a sudden to be struck away from us, and we should find then that to be dead to God was death indeed, a death from which there is no waking, and in which there is no sleeping for ever.

### III.

#### THE BLESSINGS OF A BENIGNANT SPIRIT.

BARNES.

[ALBERT BARNES was born near Rome, New York, December 1st 1798, and died in West Philadelphia, December 24th 1870. He was a graduate of Hamilton College and Princeton Theological Seminary. After a pastoral charge of five years in Morristown, New Jersey, he was installed in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, in 1830. Here he actively ministered thirty-seven years, when failing eye-sight compelled him to become Emeritus Pastor. For conscience' sake, Rev. Mr. Barnes repeatedly declined the well-earned title of Doctor of Divinity. By dint of utilizing the spare hours before 9 A. M., he composed twenty thoughtful volumes on religious and theological subjects. Chief among these were his Notes, on the New Testament, Isaiah, Daniel, and Psalms, whose circulation before his death reached a million volumes. His writings are clear, incisive, and plain, richer in matter and method than style. The following discourse is taken, by permission, from his excellent "Practical Sermons," now out of print.]

*"Put on, therefore, as the elect of God—kindness."*—Col. iii. 12.

WHAT an invaluable blessing is a kind and benignant spirit! How invaluable to an individual, in a family, in a church, in any community! It is a spirit which the gospel is adapted to produce; which serves much to remove the asperities which are met with in life; which contributes to happiness everywhere. My wish, at this time, is to illustrate its nature and importance; and I shall show,

I. In what it consists; and

II. Its value.

I. Kindness, or a benignant spirit, consists in the following things.

(1.) In a *disposition to be pleased*—a *willingness* to be satisfied with the conduct of others towards us. This disposition lies back of all external actions, and refers to the general habit of feeling. It is not that which is created by any sudden impression made on us, or by receiving from others any proofs of favor; it is a previous disposition rather to be satisfied than dissatisfied; rather to look on the favorable than the unfavorable side in the conduct of others; rather to suppose that they are right than to suppose that they are wrong; and rather to attribute to them good motives than bad motives. It is such a disposition that if we ever think unfavorably of others, it is because we are *compelled* to do it rather than because we *wish* to do it; such that any moment we would be willing to listen to any explanation in extenuation of their conduct.

This disposition contributes much towards our being actually pleased. It is usually not difficult to find enough in others that we can approve to make life pleasant and harmonious when we are disposed to; and this disposition will do more than all other things to make social life move on with comfort and with joy. This disposition stands opposed to a spirit of fault-finding and complaining; a temper which nothing satisfies, and which nothing pleases; a propensity to magnify trifles and never to forget them; and a turn of mind that is irritable, and that is constantly chafed and fretted. For this latter state of mind we are now much in the habit of blaming the nervous system, and there can be no doubt that from the intimate connection between the mind and the body, a disordered nervous system may have much to do with such a temperament. But it may be also true that the body is often blamed when the soul should be, and that the responsibility is often improperly changed from the heart to the nervous system. More frequently this disposition is to be traced to long habits of indulgence; to mortified pride; to an overweening self-valuation; to the fact that the respect

is not paid us which we think we deserve; to the fact that the heart is wrong, and the will obstinate and unsubdued. The spirit of the gospel of Christ would do more to eradicate this evil disposition than any physical applications to the nervous system, and it is the heart rather than the bodily health that demands appropriate treatment. A man who is willing to be pleased and gratified will in general pass pleasantly through life. He who is willing to take his proper place in society, content with the small share of public notice which properly belongs to an individual, and believing it to be possible that others may be as likely to be right in their opinions as he is, will usually find the journey of life to be a pleasant way, and will not have much occasion to be dissatisfied with the world at large.

(2.) A spirit of kindness or benignity consists in a disposition to attribute to others the possession of good motives when it can be done. One of the rights of every man in society is, to have it supposed that he acts with good intentions unless he furnishes irrefragable proof to the contrary. This right is quite as valuable as the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"—and is essential to them all. He may do me a more palpable and lasting wrong who ascribes to me a bad motive, than he does who takes my purse; and he has no more right to do the one than the other. Now there are many actions performed which may be either from a good or bad motive. There are many where the action may be attended with injurious consequences when the motive is good. There are many where the motive may be for a long time concealed; where we may not be permitted to understand why it was done; and where it may seem to have been originated from the worst possible intention. In all such cases, it is our duty to suppose that the motive was good until the contrary becomes so clear that it can no longer be doubted. Where an action may be performed from either a good or a bad intention, it is a mere

act of justice that we should attribute the correct and noble motive in the case rather than evil one—or at least that we should not assume that the motive was bad—for “love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things; AND NEVER FAILETH.” 1 Cor. xiii. 6, 7, 8. Yet there are some persons who seem never to have heard of this rule. The worst possible motive is at once suspected. The worst construction is given to an action. In the view of such persons every circumstance combines to lead to the conclusion that the motive was a bad one. Such persons, too, will have that unhappy species of memory which recollects all the *ill* of another, and forgets all the *good*; and when an action is performed of doubtful character, it is surprising what a number of similar deeds will be found to have been treasured up in the memory, all going to confirm the suspicion that the motive was a bad one. Now a spirit of benignity and kindness will lead us to pursue directly the contrary course. The first impression on such a mind will be, that the action was performed from a good motive. That impression will be retained until there is positive proof to the contrary; and will be confirmed by the recollections of the former life. The good will have been remembered; the evil will have been forgiven and forgotten. Past deeds of unkindness towards you will be found to have been written in sand which the next wave washed away; deeds of beneficence will be found to have been engraved on marble or steel. A kind memory has treasured up all the favors ever shown you—and now they come flocking to your recollection, and help to throw the mantle of charity over the act now even if it be wrong.

(3.) A spirit of benignity or kindness consists in bearing with the foibles, infirmities, and faults of others. We do not go a great distance with any fellow-traveller on the journey of life, before we find that he is far from our notions of per-

fection. He has a temperament different from our own. He may be sanguine, or choleric, or melancholy in his temperament, while we are just the reverse. He has peculiarities of taste, and habit, and disposition, which differ much from our own. He has his own plans and purposes in life; and like ourselves he does not like to be crossed or embarrassed. He has his own way and time of doing things; his own manner of expression; his own modes of speech. He has grown up under other influences than those which have affected our minds; and his habits of feeling may be regulated by his education, and by his calling in life. Neighbors have occasion to remark this in their neighbors; friends in their friends; kindred in their kindred. In proportion as the relations of life become more intimate, the more these peculiarities become visible; and hence the more intimate we become, the more necessity there is for bearing patiently with the frailties and foibles of others. In the most tender connections, like that between a husband and wife; a parent and child; a brother and sister, it may require much of a gentle and yielding spirit to adapt ourselves to their peculiarities so that life shall move on smoothly and harmoniously. When there is a disposition to do this, we soon learn to bear and forbear. We understand how to avoid the look, the gesture, the allusion, the remark that would excite improperly the mind of our friend. We dwell on those points where there is sympathy and harmony; and we thus remove the asperities of character, and the feelings and affections meet and mingle together. With any one of our friends there may be enough, if excited, to make life with him uncomfortable. A husband and wife—such is the imperfection of human nature—can find, if they will, enough in each other to embitter life, if they choose to magnify foibles, and to become irritated at imperfections; and there is no friendship which may not be marred in this way if we will suffer it. The virtues of life are tender plants. Love

is most delicate in its texture, and may not be rudely handled. To be preserved, we must cease to expect perfection. We must be prepared for little differences of opinion, and varieties of temperament. We must indulge the friend that we love, in the little peculiarities of saying and doing things which may be so important to him, but which can be of so little moment to us. Like children, we must suffer each other to build his own play-house in his own way, and not quarrel with him because he does not think our way the best. If we have a spirit of kindness, we shall cease to look for perfection in any others; and this is much in promoting our own happiness in any relation of life. It will make us indulgent, and forgiving, and tender. Conscious of our own imperfection, we shall not harshly blame others; sensible how much we need indulgence, we shall not withhold it from them; feeling deeply how much our happiness depends on their being kind toward *our* frailties and foibles, we shall not be unwilling to evince the same indulgence towards *them*.

(4.) A kind and benignant spirit is shown by our not blaming others with undue harshness when they fall into sin. In no circumstances does frail human nature need more of the kindness of charity and forgiveness—nowhere usually is less benignity shown. We weep with the father who has lost his only son; we sympathize with the man who has lost his all in a storm at sea; we compassionate him who is deprived of the organs of vision or of hearing, to whom the world is always dark, or who is a stranger to the sweet voice of wife or child, or to the soul-stirring harmony of music. But when a man is overtaken by a fault, all our sympathies at once usually die. We feel that he has cut all the chords that bound him to the living and the social world, and that henceforth he is to be treated as an alien and an outcast. We exclude him from our social circles. We strip him of office. We bind and incarcerate him. We place him in a



dark, damp, cold dungeon. We feed him on coarse fare. We separate him from wife, and children, and home, and books and friends. To a certain extent all this is inevitable and proper. We owe it to ourselves; we owe it to the community. But we need not withhold our kindness from an offending brother. We need not withdraw all the expressions of benignant feeling. "Brethren," says Paul, "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. vi. 1. "Love suffereth long and is kind; love is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; believeth all things; hopeth all things." Let the following things be remembered when a brother is accused of a fault. (1.) He is a brother still. He has the same corrupt, fallen, ruined nature that we have—and originally no worse. "John Bunyan, but by the grace of God," was the honest expression of the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, when he saw a poor victim of profaneness and intemperance. That erring, guilty, and wretched man—that man of guilt, and profaneness, and crime, is thy brother. You and he had the same father. The same blood flows in your veins and his. That wretched female—that frail and guilty woman—is thy sister. You had a common, erring mother. She once had sympathies like thine own. She had a heart that could love and be loved, like thine. She once had a mother that loved her as thine loved thee. She once was playful, and blithe, and happy, when a child—and perchance beautiful and accomplished, as others are. Fallen, and ruined, and guilty as she may be, she is not beyond the possibility of being saved; she is not beyond the reach of prayer. For the soul of that same guilty and erring daughter of vice, the Saviour's blood was shed as well as for thine own; and the "kindness and love of God our Saviour" may yet recover even her, and make her a companion with thyself in glory. Remember (2.) that when another *seems* to fall into sin, if

you understood all the circumstances of the case, its aspect might be greatly changed. "Judge not, that ye be not judged; condemn not, that ye be not condemned," was the command of the Master. Luke vi. 37. "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." 1 Pet. iv. 8. Remember (3.) that when a brother seems to err or fall, it is possible that an explanation may remove all the difficulty. Give him that opportunity. It is due to him. Appearances, which he could not control, may have been sadly against him; and malignant enemies may have helped the matter on. It is due to him to allow him a full opportunity to explain all. A kind spirit would make you ready to listen; and the same spirit, when he has *confessed* his error—if he has done wrong—would lead you to say, "My brother, I forgive you. The offence shall be remembered no more. I will forgive you as Christ hath forgiven me. Your fault shall not be alluded to in our intercourse; it shall not be allowed to make me unkind, or suspicious; and I will never refer to it to harrow up your feelings, or to suffuse your cheeks with shame. So Christ hath forgiven me; so I forgive you." (5.) A kind and benignant spirit is that which prompts us to aid others when in our power. It wishes well to the stranger; to the wayfaring man; to the fatherless; to the poor; to the prisoner; to the oppressed. It looks rather on considerations why they should be aided than on those why they should not be; and asks the question, not how much we *must* do for them, but how much we *may* do. On the man who has failed in business honorably to himself, or without dishonor, it looks with benignity, and asks in what way he may be assisted, and not how his fall may be accelerated. The poor man at the door it meets with the inquiry whether he may be assisted consistently with other duties and obligations. For the man in oppression, it seeks relief when it can be done, and prompts to measures to secure it. When relief is

almost hopeless, still it looks benignantly towards the sufferer, and is willing to listen to any suggestions for his aid. It does not lead us at once to sit down as if nothing can be done—appalled by the magnitude of the evil, or indifferent to it; nor does it lead us to favor the opinion that all attempts at relief are improper, or to be abandoned.

I may add, on this point, that where relief cannot be afforded, it should be declined with a gentle and benevolent heart. It often happens, from the necessity of the case, that we must decline aid to the poor, to the needy, to the stranger, and to the cause of humanity and religion at large. Circumstances put it out of our power to assist them. But it mitigates the evil if benevolence beams in the eye, and gentleness and love dictate the terms by which it is done. It may become pleasant even to have an application rejected. It may be done with so much good will and sincerity; where it is so evident that the heart is in it; where there is such a manifest wish that the circumstances were different, that the pain of the refusal shall all be taken away, and good shall be done to the soul even where the aid sought for the body could not be granted. We are often troubled by applications for aid—I say *troubled*, from their frequency, and because we allow them to trouble us. We are liable to constant solicitations of this sort—solicitations all of which we cannot comply with. It can neither be right for us, nor would it be possible for us to comply with them all. Part of those who apply to us for assistance we know; part are strangers whom we may never see again. Yet we are to remember that most of them are children of misfortune. Many of them have by nature sensibilities as keen as we ourselves, and they will feel a cold look and a stern repulse as much as we. We are to remember, too, that not a few of them suffer more from the necessity of asking assistance than from almost any other ill of life. Long will a widowed mother suffer from poverty and want, before she

will go to the stranger to seek assistance. Long would she suffer still rather than do it, but it is not her own sufferings that prompt her to it;—it is the cry of her children for bread, the desolation of her home without fuel, and without food, and without work, that compels her to subdue her strong reluctance to solicit charity, and she does this under a depth of mingled, agitated emotions which the affluent never know. If to all this there is now to be added the cool repulse; the harsh, forbidding look; the refusal even to hear the simple story of her sufferings, and the sufferings of her children, and if she is to return and say to them that nothing can be obtained for them—and to see them weep and suffer the more by disappointment, you infuse the bitterest dreg into her cup of woes. Christian kindness would have mitigated all; Christian kindness might have prompted to that *little* aid from your superabundant wealth, which not being missed in *your* dwelling, would have made hers to her like Eden. The same thing is true when help is asked for any object of beneficence. The man who asks your aid to relieve a people suffering the evils of famine; or to help a family whose all has been consumed by fire; or to liberate a slave from bondage; or to enable a man to purchase his wife or children in order that they all may be free together; or to send the preached gospel to the heathen world, has a right to a kind reception. On his part it is a work of benevolence, in which he is usually no more interested than we are—and in doing it he may have overcome much reluctant feeling, and sacrificed many comforts, from the strong conviction of duty. He has a right to expect, where aid cannot be granted for his object, that his feelings shall not be harrowed up by an uncivil and cold reception. If aid is declined, he has a right to expect that it should be in gentleness and love—so declined that it may be pleasant for him and for you to meet when your circumstances shall be better.

(6.) Once more. A kind spirit should be shown toward those who are applied to for aid, and who decline to assist us. Here, I fear, we walk sometimes not charitably toward others. We apply to them for assistance, and are refused. How natural to feel that there was something unkind in it! Especially is this so, if we see him to whom we apply live in a splendid house, and surrounded with the means of luxury; or if we find him engaged in a large business; or if we see him rolling along in his carriage. And it may be difficult to avoid the conviction that he might easily have assisted us, and that he is a man of a narrow and parsimonious spirit. I admit, too, that in not a few instances this irresistible conviction may be well founded; and I admit, too, that there is *always* an inconsistency—a painful, and I believe a guilty inconsistency—where this style of living is maintained, and where the hand is systematically closed against the objects of Christian benevolence. But there is often much that may be said that would mitigate the harshness of your judgment. You see one side. But you may not know how much he is embarrassed in business; or how much he secretly gives away to other objects; or how many poor relations he may have dependent on him; or how imperative may be the demand on him just now to meet pressing obligations. For one, I am endeavoring to learn to exercise more charity for those who seem to me to be able, and who fall below the standard in benevolence which I should regard as the true one. I think on two things: first, that I do not know all the circumstances in the case; and second, that to his own master each one standeth or falleth. It is *his* business, not mine. I can insist only as a right that he should show "*kindness*"—whether he give or withhold. In other things he must act as he shall answer it to God. Such are some of the things involved in kindness—a disposition to be pleased—a readiness to impute good motives—a patient bearing with the faults and foibles

of others—a disposition not to blame them harshly when they fall—a readiness to aid, and kindness when aid cannot be rendered—and a charitable spirit toward those who refuse to aid us when we apply to them. Let us,

II. In the second place, consider the value of this spirit. A few remarks will be all ; and with these I shall close. In illustrating this, I observe,

(1.) That much of the *comfort of life* depends on it. Life is made up of little things that are constantly occurring, but which if disarranged or displaced render us miserable. Breathing is in itself a small matter, and ordinarily scarcely noticed ; the beating of the heart, and the gentle flowing of the blood, are in themselves small matters, and it is only when they are deranged or laborious that we become sensible of their importance. So in morals and in social intercourse. The happiness of life depends not so much on great and illustrious deeds ; not so much on glory in the field of battle, or splendid talents, or brilliant eloquence, or the stern virtues that shine in daring achievements, as in the quiet duties that are constantly occurring. It is in the kind look ; the gentle spirit ; the peaceful, calm, contented disposition ; the cheerful answer ; the unaffected and unobtrusive interest in the welfare of others ; the mild eye and the smooth brow which show that the heart is full of love. When these are what they should be, they are to social intercourse what unobstructed breathing, and the healthful flow of blood along the numerous arteries and veins of the body are to the vigor and comfort of the bodily system. Life cannot be happy, if it can be prolonged, without them ; and when these things do not exist, comfort dies.

(2.) *Usefulness* depends on this no less than happiness. A man's usefulness in the Christian life depends far more on the kindness of his daily temper, than on great and glorious deeds that shall attract the admiration of the world, and that shall send his name down to future times. It is

the little rivulet that glides through the meadow, and that runs along day and night by the farm-house, that is useful, rather than the swollen flood, or the noisy cataract. Niagara excites our wonder, and fills the mind with amazement and awe. We feel that God is there; and it is well to go far to see once, at least, how solemn it is to realize that we are in the presence of the Great God, and to see what wonders his hand can do. But one Niagara is enough for a continent—or a world; while that same world needs thousands and tens of thousands of silvery fountains, and gently flowing rivulets, that shall water every farm, and every meadow, and every garden, and that shall flow on every day and every night with their gentle and quiet beauty. So with life. We admire the great deeds of Howard's benevolence, and wish that all men were like him. We revere the names of the illustrious martyrs. We honor the man who will throw himself in the "imminent deadly breach," and save his country—and such men and such deeds we must have when the occasion calls for them. But all men are not to be useful in this way—any more than all waters are to rush by us in swelling and angry floods. We are to be useful in more limited spheres. We are to cultivate the gentle charities of life. We are by a consistent walk to benefit those around us—though in a humble vale, and though like the gentle rivulet we may attract little attention, and may soon cease to be remembered on earth. Kindness will *always* do good. It makes others happy—and that is doing good. It prompts us to seek to benefit others—and that is doing good. It makes others gentle, and benignant—and that is doing good.

Let it be remembered, also, that it is by the temper, and by the spirit that we manifest, that the world forms its opinion of the nature of religion. It is not by great deeds in trying circumstances that men will judge of the nature of the gospel. The world at large cares little how Ignatius and Polycarp felt, or how they died. Perhaps the mass of

those around you never heard their names. They are little impressed by the virtues which Latimer, and Ridley, and Cranmer evinced at the stake. But that unbelieving husband cares much for the gentle and kind spirit of the wife—for all his happiness depends on it; that brother is interested much in the conversation and the spirit of his sister—for he daily observes her temper, and is forming his views of religion from what he sees in her; that child is constantly marking the temper of the father and the mother, and is forming his views of religion not so much from what he hears in the pulpit, or in the Sabbath-school, as from the temper which you evince from one day to another. In these fields—humble though they may seem, and little as they may appear to furnish a theatre for the display of eminent virtues—your usefulness lies. There, with the “gentleness” that was in Christ you cannot but be useful; and exhibiting such a spirit you will not live in vain.

Let it be remembered, also, that *all* usefulness may be prevented by an unkind, a sour, a crabbed temper of mind. A spirit of constant fault-finding; a harsh-judging temper; a constant irritability; little inequalities and perversenesses in the look, and air, and manner of a wife, whose brow is cloudy and dissatisfied her husband cannot tell why; or of a husband chafed, and fretted, and morose when he returns home from his daily toil, and who is satisfied with nothing, will more than neutralize all the good you can do, and render your life anything but a blessing. Some come into the church cursed by the fall with such a crabbedness of temper. Some have an unmanageable and perverse nervous temperament. Some are proud, and envious, and disappointed, and ambitious, and all these things are constantly breaking out in their professedly religious life; and even amidst much that is excellent, these passions are so constantly showing themselves that no one can tell whether there is at heart any true religion. Now you may give money for benevolent



objects, but it will not prevent the injury which will be done by such an unhappy temperament. You may build churches, and found schools and asylums; you may have "the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and you may bestow all your goods to feed the poor, and give your body to be burned," and all will not answer the purpose. It will all be like "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Nothing will be a compensation for that "love which suffers long and is KIND:—that love which envieth not, which is not soon provoked, which thinketh no evil, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and which NEVER FAILETH."

(3.) And finally, this virtue is commended to us by the example of the Master—the Lord Jesus. "I beseech you," says Paul, "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 1.) What an expression! THE GENTLENESS OF CHRIST! How much is there in that short sentence! How much to admire; how much to imitate! Christ performed great deeds—such as no other one ever did; but not that we should imitate *them*. He spake to the tempest, and stilled the rolling billows—but not that we should lift up our voices when the wind blows, and the thunders roll, and the waves are piled mountain high, and attempt to hush them to peace. He stood by the grave and spake, and the dead man left his tomb, and came forth to life—but not that we should place ourselves by the graves of the dead and attempt to restore them to life. He opened the eyes of the blind, and taught the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing—but not that we should imitate him in this, or attempt by miracle to give vigor to the feeble, or health to the diseased. But Christ was meek and gentle, that we might be so too. Christ was benignant and kind, that we might be too. Christ patiently bore reviling that we might do it also; he was not irritable, and uncharitable, and fretful,

and envious, and revengeful—and in all these we may imitate him. His was a life of benevolence, diffusive like the light of a morning without clouds; a life undisturbed by conflicting emotions; unbroken by a harsh and dissatisfied temper; kind when others were unkind; gentle when the storms of furious passions raged in their bosoms; and tranquil and serene while all around him were distracted by anger, and ambition, and envy, and revenge. To us may the same spirit be given; and while the world around us is agitated with passion, and pride, and wrath, in our hearts may there reign evermore “the gentleness of Christ.” Amen.

## IV.

### THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN.

BUNYAN.

[JOHN BUNYAN, the "Shakspeare of Divines," was born the son of a travelling tinker, at Elstow, Bedfordshire, in 1628. He was ignorant and dissipated till after his marriage, at the age of nineteen. In 1655 he became a Baptist preacher, and his zealous labors led, five years later, to his imprisonment in Bedford jail with other dissenters. "Here," states Dr. Barlow, "with only two books—the Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs—he employed his time for twelve years and a half, in preaching to, and praying with, his fellow-prisoners, in writing several of his works ('Pilgrim's Progress,' etc.) and in making tagged lace for the support of himself and family." After his release in 1672, he evangelized his brethren throughout England till his death at Snowhill, August 31st 1688. His imagination was strong and creative, his spirit earnest and profoundly religious; hence his masterpieces are his spiritual allegories. "The Holy War" deserves to be more read than it is, as well as this excellent metaphorical sermon, scarcely known to modern readers. Its sub-title is, "A Description of the Man that gets to Heaven." Owing to its length, a minor part has been omitted.]

*"So run that ye may obtain."*—1 Cor. ix. 24.

HEAVEN and happiness is that which every one desireth, insomuch that wicked Balaam could say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Yet, for all this, there are but very few that do obtain that ever-to-be-desired glory, insomuch that many eminent professors drop short of a welcome from God into this pleasant place. The apostle, therefore, because he did desire the salvation of the souls of the Corinthians, to whom he writes this epistle, layeth them down in these words such counsel which, if taken, would be for their help and advantage.

First. Not to be wicked, and sit still, and wish for heaven; but to run for it.

Secondly. Not to content themselves with every kind of running, but, saith he, "So run that ye may obtain." As if he should say, some, because they would not lose their souls, they begin to run betimes, they run apace, they run with patience, they run the right way. Do you so run. Some run from both father and mother, friends and companions, and thus, that they may have the crown. Do you so run. Some run through temptations, afflictions, good report, evil report, that they may win the pearl. Do you so run. "So run that ye may obtain."

These words they are taken from men's running for a wager: a very apt similitude to set before the eyes of the saints of the Lord. "Know you not that they which run in a race run all, but one obtains the prize? So run that ye may obtain." That is, do not only run, but be sure you win as well as run. "So run that ye may obtain."

I shall not need to make any great ado in opening the words at this time, but shall rather lay down one doctrine that I do find in them; and in prosecuting that, I shall show you, in some measure, the scope of the words.

The doctrine is this: They that will have heaven, must run for it; I say, they that will have heaven, they must run for it. I beseech you to heed it well. "Know ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize? So run ye." The prize is heaven, and if you will have it, you must run for it. You have another scripture for this in the 12th of the Hebrews, the 1st, 2d, and 3d verses: "Wherefore seeing also," saith the apostle, "that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." And let us run, saith he.

Again, saith Paul, "I so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I," &c.

But before I go any farther:

1. Fleeing. Observe, That this running is not an ordinary, or any sort of running, but it is to be understood of the swiftest sort of running; and therefore, in the 6th of the Hebrews, it is called a fleeing: "That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us." Mark, who have fled. It is taken from that 20th of Joshua, concerning the man that was to flee to the city of refuge, when the avenger of blood was hard at his heels, to take vengeance on him for the offence he had committed; therefore it is a running or fleeing for one's life: A running with all might and main, as we use to say. So run.

2. Pressing. Secondly, This running in another place is called a pressing. "I press toward the mark;" which signifieth, that they that will have heaven, they must not stick at any difficulties they meet with; but press, crowd, and thrust through all that may stand between heaven and their souls. So run.

3. Continuing. Thirdly, This running is called in another place, a continuing in the way of life. "If you continue in the faith grounded, and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel of Christ." Not to run a little now and then, by fits and starts, or half-way, or almost thither, but to run for my life, to run through all difficulties, and to continue therein to the end of the race, which must be to the end of my life. "So run that ye may obtain." And the reasons for this point are these:

1. Because all or every one that runneth doth not obtain the prize; there be many that do run, yea, and run far too, who yet miss of the crown that standeth at the end of the race. You know that all that run in a race do not obtain the victory; they all run, but one wins. And so it is here; it is not every one that runneth, nor every one that seeketh, nor every one that striveth for the mastery, that hath it. "Though a man do strive for the mastery," saith Paul,

“yet he is not crowned, unless he strive lawfully;” that is, unless he so run, and so strive, as to have God’s approbation. What, do ye think that every heavy-heeled professor will have heaven? What, every lazy one? every wanton and foolish professor, that will be stopped by anything, kept back by any thing, that scarce runneth so fast heavenward as a snail creepeth on the ground? Nay, there are some professors that do not go on so fast in the way of God as a snail doth go on the wall; and yet these think, that heaven and happiness is for them. But stay, there are many more that run than there be that obtain; therefore he that will have heaven must run for it.

2. Because you know, that though a man do run, yet if he do not overcome, or win, as well as run, what will they be the better for their running? They will get nothing. You know the man that runneth, he doth do it that he may win the prize; but if he doth not obtain it, he doth lose his labor, spend his pains and time, and that to no purpose; I say, he getteth nothing. And ah! how many such runners will there be found in the day of judgment? Even multitudes, multitudes that have run, yea, run so far as to come to heaven-gates, and not able to get any farther, but there stand knocking, when it is too late, crying, Lord, Lord, when they have nothing but rebukes for their pains. Depart from me, you come not here, you come too late, you run too lazily; the door is shut. “When once the master of the house is risen up,” saith Christ, “and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, I will say, I know you not, Depart,” &c. O sad will the state of those be that run and miss; therefore, if you will have heaven, you must run for it; and “so run that ye may obtain.”

3. Because the way is long (I speak metaphorically), and there is many a dirty step, many a high hill, much work to do, a wicked heart, world, and devil to overcome; I say,

there are many steps to be taken by those that intend to be saved, by running or walking in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham. Out of Egypt thou must go through the Red Sea; thou must run a long and tedious journey, through the vast howling wilderness, before thou come to the land of promise.

4. They that will go to heaven they must run for it; because, as the way is long, so the time in which they are to get to the end of it is very uncertain; the time present is the only time; thou hast no more time allotted thee than that thou now enjoyest: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Do not say, I have time enough to get to heaven seven years hence: for I tell thee, the bell may toll for thee before seven days more be ended; and when death comes, away thou must go, whether thou art provided or not; and therefore look to it; make no delays; it is not good dallying with things of so great concernment as the salvation or damnation of thy soul. You know he that hath a great way to go in a little time, and less by half than he thinks of, he had need to run for it.

5. They that will have heaven, they must run for it; because the devil, the law, sin, death, and hell follow them. There is never a poor soul that is going to heaven, but the devil, the law, sin, death, and hell, make after that soul. "The devil, your adversary, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." And I will assure you, the devil is nimble, he can run apace, he is light of foot, he hath overtaken many, he hath turned up their heels, and hath given them an everlasting fall. Also the law, that can shoot a great way, have a care thou keep out of the reach of those great guns, the ten commandments. Hell also hath a wide mouth; it can stretch itself farther than you are aware of. And as the angel said to Lot, "Take heed, look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain" (that is, anywhere

between this and heaven), "lest thou be consumed;" so say I to thee, Take heed, tarry not, lest either the devil, hell, death, or the fearful curses of the law of God, do overtake thee, and throw thee down in the midst of thy sins, so as never to rise and recover again. If this were well considered, then thou, as well as I, wouldst say, They that will have heaven must run for it.

6. They that will go to heaven must run for it; because perchance the gates of heaven may be shut shortly. Sometimes sinners have not heaven-gates open to them so long as they suppose; and if they be once shut against a man, they are so heavy, that all the men in the world, nor all the angels in heaven, are not able to open them. "I shut, and no man can open," saith Christ. And how if thou shouldst come but one quarter of an hour too late? I tell thee, it will cost thee an eternity to bewail thy misery in. Francis Spira can tell thee what it is to stay till the gate of mercy be quite shut; or to run so lazily, that they be shut before thou get within them. What, to be shut out! what, out of heaven! Sinner, rather than lose it, run for it; yea, and "so run that thou mayst obtain."

7. *Lastly*, Because if thou lose, thou lovest all, thou lovest soul, God, Christ, heaven, ease, peace, &c. Besides, thou layest thyself open to all the shame, contempt, and reproach, that either God, Christ, saints, the world, sin, the devil, and all, can lay upon thee. As Christ saith of the foolish builder, so will I say of thee, if thou be such a one who runs and misses; I say, even all that go by will begin to mock at thee, saying, This man began to run well, but was not able to finish. But more of this anon.

*Quest.* But how should a poor soul do to run? For this very thing is that which afflicteth me sore (as you say), to think that I may run, and yet fall short. Methinks to fall short at last, O, it fears me greatly! Pray tell me, therefore, how I should run.



*Ans.* That thou mayst indeed be satisfied in this particular consider these following things.

The first direction. If thou wouldst so run as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, then be sure that thou get into the way that leadeth thither: For it is a vain thing to think that ever thou shalt have the prize, though thou runnest never so fast, unless thou art in the way that leads to it. Set the case, that there should be a man in London that was to run to York for a wager; now, though he run never so swiftly, yet if he run full south, he might run himself quickly out of breath, and be never the nearer the prize, but rather the farther off. Just so is it here; it is not simply the runner, nor yet the hasty runner, that winneth the crown, unless he be in the way that leadeth thereto. I have observed, that little time which I have been a professor, that there is a great running to and fro, some this way, and some that way, yet it is to be feared most of them are out of the way, and then, though they run as swift as the eagle can fly, they are benefited nothing at all.

Here is one runs a-quaking, another a-ranting; one again runs after the baptism, and another after the Independency: Here is one for Free-will, and another for Presbytery; and yet possibly most of all these sects run quite the wrong way, and yet every one is for his life, his soul, either for heaven or hell.

If thou now say, Which is the way? I tell thee it is Christ, the Son of Mary, the Son of God. Jesus saith, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." So then thy business is (if thou wouldst have salvation), to see if Christ be thine, with all his benefits; whether he hath covered thee with his righteousness, whether he hath showed thee that thy sins are washed away with his heart-blood, whether thou art planted into him, and whether thou have faith in him, so as to make a life out of him, and to conform thee to him; that is, such faith as to

conclude that thou art righteous, because Christ is thy righteousness, and so constrained to walk with him as the joy of thy heart, because he saveth thy soul. And for the Lord's sake take heed, and do not deceive thyself, and think thou art in the way upon too slight grounds; for if thou miss of the way, thou wilt miss of the prize, and if thou miss of that I am sure thou wilt lose thy soul, even that soul which is worth more than the whole world.

But I have treated more largely on this in my book of the two covenants, and therefore shall pass it now; only I beseech thee to have a care of thy soul, and that thou mayst so do, take this counsel:

Mistrust thy own strength, and throw it away; down on thy knees in prayer to the Lord for the spirit of truth; search his word for direction; flee seducers' company; keep company with the soundest Christians, that have most experience of Christ; and be sure thou have a care of Quakers, Ranters, Free-willers: Also do not have too much company with some Anabaptists, though I go under that name myself. I tell thee this is such a serious matter, and I fear thou wilt so little regard it, that the thought of the worth of the thing, and of thy too light regarding of it, doth even make my heart ache whilst I am writing to thee. The Lord teach thee the way by his Spirit, and then I am sure thou wilt know it. So run.

Only by the way, let me bid thee have a care of two things, and so I shall pass to the next thing.

1. Have a care of relying on the outward obedience to any of God's commands, or thinking thyself ever the better in the sight of God for that.

2. Take heed of fetching peace for thy soul from any inherent righteousness: But if thou canst believe, that as thou art a sinner, so thou art justified freely by the love of God, through the redemption that is in Christ; and that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven thee, not because he

saw anything done, or to be done, in or by thee, to move him thereunto to do it; for that is the right way; the Lord put thee into it, and keep thee in it.

The second direction. As thou shouldst get into the way, so thou shouldst also be much in studying and musing on the way. You know men that would be expert in anything, they are usually much in studying of that thing, and so likewise is it with those that quickly grow expert in any way. This therefore thou shouldst do; let thy study be much exercised about Christ, which is the way, what he is, what he hath done, and why he is what he is, and why he hath done what is done; as, why "he took upon him the form of a servant," (Phil. ii.); why he was "made in the likeness of man;" why he cried; why he died; why he "bare the sin of the world;" why he was made sin, and why he was made righteousness; why he is in heaven in the nature of man, and what he doth there. Be much in musing and considering of these things; be thinking also enough of those places which thou must not come near, but leave some on this hand, and some on that hand; as it is with those that travel into other countries, they must leave such a gate on this hand, and such a bush on that hand, and go by such a place, where standeth such a thing. Thus therefore you must do: "Avoid such things which are expressly forbidden in the word of God." Withdraw thy foot far from her, "and come not nigh the door of her house, for her steps take hold of hell, going down to the chambers of death." And so of everything that is not in the way, have a care of it, that thou go not by it; come not near it, have nothing to do with it. So run.

The third direction. Not only thus, but in the next place, Thou must strip thyself of those things that may hang upon thee, to the hindering of thee in the way to the kingdom of heaven, as covetousness, pride, lust, or whatever else thy heart may be inclining unto, which may hinder

thee in this heavenly race. Men that run for a wager, if they intend to win as well as run, they do not use to encumber themselves, or carry those things about them that may be an hindrance to them in their running. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things:" That is, he layeth aside everything that would be anywise a disadvantage to him; as saith the apostle, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." It is but a vain thing to talk of going to heaven, if thou let thy heart be encumbered with those things that would hinder. Would you not say that such a man would be in danger of losing, though he run, if he fill his pockets with stones, hang heavy garments on his shoulders, and great lumpish shoes on his feet? So it is here; thou talkest of going to heaven, and yet fillest thy pocket with stones, *i. e.*, fillest thy heart with this world, lettest that hang on thy shoulders, with its profits and pleasures: Alas, alas, thou art widely mistaken: If thou intendest to win, thou must strip, thou must lay aside every weight, thou must be temperate in all things. Thou must so run.

The fourth direction. Beware of by-paths; take heed thou dost not turn into those lanes which lead out of the way. There are crooked paths, paths in which men go astray, paths that lead to death and damnation, but take heed of all those. Some of them are dangerous because of practice, some because of opinion, but mind them not; mind the path before thee, look right before thee, turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, but let thine eyes look right on, even right before thee; "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: "Remove thy foot far from evil." This counsel being not so seriously taken as given, is the reason of that starting from opinion to opinion, reeling this way and that way, out of this lane into that lane, and so

missing the way to the kingdom. Though the way to heaven be but one, yet there are many crooked lanes and by-paths shoot down upon it, as I may say. And again, notwithstanding the kingdom of heaven be the biggest city, yet usually those by-paths are most beaten, most travellers go those ways; and therefore the way to heaven is hard to be found, and as hard to be kept in, by reason of these. Yet, nevertheless, it is in this case as it was with the harlot of Jericho; she had one scarlet thread tied in her window, by which her house was known: So it is here, the scarlet streams of Christ's blood run throughout the way to the kingdom of heaven; therefore mind that, see if thou do find the besprinkling of the blood of Christ in the way, and if thou do, be of good cheer, thou art in the right way; but have a care thou beguile not thyself with a fancy; for then thou mayst light into any lane or way; but that thou mayst not be mistaken, consider, though it seem never so pleasant, yet if thou do not find that in the very middle of the road there is written with the heart-blood of Christ, that he came into the world to save sinners, and that we are justified, though we are ungodly, shun that way; for this it is which the apostle meaneth when he saith, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh." How easy a matter is it in this our day, for the devil to be too cunning for poor souls, by calling his by-paths the way to the kingdom! If such an opinion or fancy be but cried up by one or more, this inscription being set upon it by the devil, [This is the way of God] how speedily, greedily, and by heaps, do poor simple souls throw away themselves upon it; especially if it be daubed over with a few external acts of morality, if so good! But this is because men do not know painted by-paths from the plain way to the kingdom of heaven. They have not yet learned the true Christ, and what his

righteousness is, neither have they a sense of their own insufficiency; but are bold, proud, presumptuous, self-conceited. And therefore,

The fifth direction. Do not thou be too much in looking too high in thy journey heavenwards. You know men that run a race do not use to stare and gaze this way and that, neither do they use to cast up their eyes too high, lest haply, through their too much gazing with their eyes after other things, they in the mean time stumble, and catch a fall. The very same case is this; if thou gaze and stare after every opinion and way that comes into the world, also if thou be prying overmuch into God's secret decrees, or let thy heart too much entertain questions about some nice foolish curiosities, thou mayst stumble and fall, as many hundreds in England have done, both in ranting and quakery, to their own eternal overthrow, without the marvellous operation of God's grace be suddenly stretched forth to bring them back again. Take heed, therefore; follow not that proud, lofty spirit, that, devil-like, cannot be content with his own station. David was of an excellent spirit, where he saith, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: My soul is even as a weaned child." Do thou so run.

The sixth direction. Take heed that you have not an ear open to every one that calleth after you as you are in your journey. Men that run, you know, if any do call after them, saying, I would speak with you, or go not too fast, and you shall have my company with you, if they run for some great matter, they use to say, Alas, I cannot stay, I am in haste, pray talk not to me now; neither can I stay for you, I am running for a wager: If I win I am made, if I lose I am undone, and therefore hinder me not. Thus wise are men when they run for corruptible things, and thus

shouldst thou do, and thou hast more cause to do so than they, forasmuch as they run for things that last not, but thou for an incorruptible glory. I give thee notice of this betimes, knowing that thou shalt have enough call after thee, even the devil, sin, this world, vain company, pleasures, profits, esteem among men, ease, pomp, pride, together with an innumerable company of such companions; one crying, Stay for me; the other saying, Do not leave me behind; a third saying, And take me along with you. What, will you go, saith the devil, without your sins, pleasures, and profits? Are you so hasty? Can you not stay and take these along with you? Will you leave your friends and companions behind you? Can you not do as your neighbors do, carry the world, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, esteem among men, along with you? Have a care thou do not let thine ear now be open to the tempting, enticing, alluring, and soul-entangling flatteries of such sink-souls as these are. "My son," saith Solomon, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

You know what it cost the young man which Solomon speaks of in the 7th of the Proverbs, that was enticed by a harlot: "With much fair speech she won him, and caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him, till he went after her as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;" even so far, "till the dart struck through his liver, and knew not that it was for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore," saith he, "O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth, let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths, for she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain (that is, kept out of heaven); by her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Soul, take this counsel, and say, Satan, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, pride, friends, companions, and everything else, let me alone, stand off, come not nigh me, for I am running for

heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ, from hell and everlasting damnation ; if I win, I win all ; and if I lose, I lose all ; let me alone, for I will not hear. So run.

The seventh direction. In the next place, be not daunted though thou meetest with never so many discouragements in thy journey thither. That man that is resolved for heaven, if Satan cannot win him by flatteries, he will endeavor to weaken him by discouragements ; saying, Thou art a sinner, thou hast broke God's law, thou art not elected, thou comest too late, the day of grace is passed, God doth not care for thee, thy heart is naught, thou art lazy, with a hundred other discouraging suggestions. And thus it was with David, where he saith, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the loving-kindness of the Lord in the land of the living." As if he should say, the devil did so rage, and my heart was so base, that had I judged according to my own sense and feeling, I had been absolutely distracted ; but I trusted to Christ in the promise, and looked that God would be as good as his promise, in having mercy upon me, an unworthy sinner ; and this is that which encouraged me, and kept me from fainting. And thus must thou do when Satan, or the law, or thy own conscience, do go about to dishearten thee, either by the greatness of thy sins, the wickedness of thy heart, the tediousness of the way, the loss of outward enjoyments, the hatred that thou wilt procure from the world, or the like ; then thou must encourage thyself with the freeness of the promises, the tender-heartedness of Christ, the merits of his blood, the freeness of his invitations to come in, the greatness of the sin of others that have been pardoned, and that the same God, through the same Christ, holdeth forth the same grace as free as ever. If these be not thy meditations, thou wilt draw very heavily in the way to heaven, if thou do not give up all for lost, and so knock off from following any farther ; therefore, I say, take heart in thy journey, and say to them that seek thy destruc



tion, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, for when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me." So run.

The eighth direction. Take heed of being offended at the cross that thou must go by before thou come to heaven. You must understand (as I have already touched) that there is no man that goeth to heaven but he must go by the cross. The cross is the standing way-mark by which all they that go to glory must pass.

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If thou art in thy way to the kingdom, my life for thine thou wilt come at the cross shortly (the Lord grant thou dost not shrink at it, so as to turn thee back again). "If any man will come after me," saith Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." The cross it stands, and hath stood, from the beginning, as a way-mark to the kingdom of heaven. You know, if one ask you the way to such and such a place, you, for the better direction, do not only say, This is the way, but then also say, You must go by such a gate, by such a stile, such a bush, tree, bridge, or such like: Why, so it is here; art thou inquiring the way to heaven? Why, I tell thee, Christ is the way; into him thou must get, into his righteousness, to be justified; and if thou art in him, thou wilt presently see the cross, thou must go close by it, thou must touch it, nay, thou must take it up, or else thou wilt quickly go out of the way that leads to heaven, and turn up some of those crooked lanes that lead down to the chambers of death.

Now thou mayest know the cross by these six things.

1. It is known in the doctrine of justification.
2. In the doctrine of mortification.
3. In the doctrine of perseverance.
4. In self-denial.
5. Patience.
6. Communion with poor saints.

1. In the doctrine of justification, there is a great deal of the cross in that; a man is forced to suffer the destruction of his own righteousness for the righteousness of another. This is no easy matter for a man to do; I assure to you it stretcheth every vein in his heart, before he will be brought to yield to it. What, for a man to deny, reject, abhor, and throw away all his prayers, tears, alms, keeping of sabbaths, hearing, reading, with the rest, in the point of justification, and to count them accursed; and to be willing, in the very midst of the sense of his sins, to throw himself wholly upon the righteousness and obedience of another man, abhorring his own, counting it as deadly sin, as the open breach of the law: I say, to do this in deed and in truth, is the biggest piece of the cross; and therefore Paul calleth this very thing a suffering; where he saith, "And I have suffered the loss of all things (which principally was his righteousness) that I might win Christ, and be found in him, not having (but rejecting) my own righteousness." That is the first.

2. In the doctrine of mortification is also much of the cross. Is it nothing for a man to lay hands on his vile opinions, on his vile sins, of his bosom sins, of his beloved, pleasant, darling sins, that stick as close to him as the flesh sticks to the bones? What, to lose all these brave things that my eyes behold, for that which I never saw with my eyes? What, to lose my pride, my covetousness, my vain company, sports and pleasures, and the rest? I tell you, this is no easy matter: if it were, what need all those prayers, sighs, watchings? What need we be so backward to it? Nay, do you not see, that some men, before they will set about this work, they will even venture the loss of their souls, heaven, God, Christ, and all? What means else all those delays and put-offs, saying, Stay a little longer, I am loth to leave my sins while I am so young, and in health? Again, what is the reason else that others do it so

by the halves, coldly and seldom, notwithstanding they are convinced over and over; nay, and also promise to amend, and yet all's in vain? I will assure you, to cut off right hands, and to pluck out right eyes, is no pleasure to the flesh.

3. The doctrine of perseverance is also cross to the flesh; which is not only to begin but to hold out, not only to bid fair, and to say, Would I had heaven, but so to know Christ, put on Christ, and walk with Christ so as to come to heaven. Indeed it is no great matter to begin to look for heaven, to begin to seek the Lord, to begin to shun sin; O but it is a very great matter to continue with God's approbation: "My servant Caleb," saith God, "is a man of another spirit, he hath followed me (followed me always, he hath continually followed me) fully, he shall possess the land." Almost all the many thousands of the children of Israel in their generation, fell short of perseverance when they walked from Egypt towards the land of Canaan. Indeed they went to work at first pretty willingly, but they were very short-winded, they were quickly out of breath, and in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

It is an easy matter for a man to run hard for a spurt, for a furlong, for a mile or two: O, but to hold out for a hundred, for a thousand, for ten thousand miles, that man that doth this, he must look to meet with cross, pain, and wearisomeness to the flesh, especially if as he goeth he meeteth with briars and quagmires, and other encumbrances, that make his journey so much the more painful.

Nay, do you not see with your eyes daily, that perseverance is a very great part of the cross? why else do men so soon grow weary? I could point out a many, that after they have followed the ways of God about a twelvemonth, others it may be two, three, or four (some more, and some less) years, they have been beat out of wind, have taken up their lodging and rest before they have got half-way to

heaven, some in this, some in that sin; and have secretly, nay, sometimes openly said, that the way is too strait, the race too long, the religion too holy, and cannot hold out, I can go no farther.

And so likewise of the other three (to wit), patience, self-denial, communion, and communication with and to the poor saints: How hard are these things? It is an easy matter to deny another man, but it is not so easy a matter to deny one's self; to deny myself out of love to God, to his gospel, to his saints, of this advantage, and of that gain; nay, of that which otherwise I might lawfully do, were it not for offending them. That scripture is but seldom read, and seldom put in practice, which saith, "I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, if it make my brother to offend;" again, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." But how froward, how hasty, how peevish, and self-resolved are the generality of professors at this day! Also how little considering the poor, unless it be to say, Be thou warmed and filled! But to give is a seldom work; also especially to give to any poor; I tell you all things are cross to flesh and blood; and that man that hath but a watchful eye over the flesh, and also some considerable measure of strength against it, he shall find his heart in these things like unto a starting horse, that is rode without a curbing bridle, ready to start at everything that is offensive to him; yea, and ready to run away, too, do what the rider can.

It is the cross which keepeth those that are kept from heaven. I am persuaded, were it not for the cross, where we have one professor we should have twenty; but this cross, that is it which spoileth all.

Some men, as I said before, when they come at the cross they can go no farther, but back again to their sins they must go. Others they stumble at it, and break their necks; others again, when they see the cross is approaching, they

turn aside to the left hand, or to the right hand, and so think to get to heaven another way; but they will be deceived. "For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall," mark, "shall be sure to suffer persecution." There are but few when they come at the cross, cry, Welcome cross! as some of the martyrs did to the stake they were burned at: Therefore, if you meet with the cross in thy journey, in what manner soever it be, be not daunted, and say, Alas, what shall I do now! But rather take courage, knowing, that by the cross is the way to the kingdom. Can a man believe in Christ, and not be hated by the devil? Can he make a profession of this Christ, and that sweetly and convincingly, and the children of Satan hold their tongue? Can darkness agree with light? or the devil endure that Christ Jesus should be honored both by faith and a heavenly conversation, and let that soul alone at quiet? Did you never read that "the dragon persecuted the woman?" And that Christ saith, "In the world you shall have tribulations?"

The ninth direction. Beg of God that he would do these two things for thee: First, Enlighten thine understanding: And, secondly, Inflame thy will. If these two be but effectually done, there is no fear but thou wilt go safe to heaven.

One of the great reasons why men and women do so little regard the other world, it is because they see so little of it: And the reason why they see so little of it is, because they have their understanding darkened: And therefore, saith Paul, "Do not you believers walk as do other Gentiles, even in the vanity of their minds, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance (or foolishness) that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Walk not as those, run not with them: alas, poor souls, they have their understandings darkened, their hearts blinded, and that is the reason they have such undervaluing thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ,

and the salvation of their souls. For when men do come to see the things of another world, what a God, what a Christ, what a heaven, and what an eternal glory there is to be enjoyed; also when they see that it is possible for them to have a share in it, I tell you it will make them run through thick and thin to enjoy it. Moses, having a sight of this, because his understanding was enlightened, "He feared not the wrath of the king, but chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He refused to be called the son of the king's daughter;" accounting it wonderful riches to be accounted worthy of so much as to suffer for Christ, with the poor despised saints; and that was because he saw him who was invisible, and had respect unto the recompense of reward. And this is that which the apostle usually prayeth for in his epistles for the saints, namely, "That they might know what is the hope of God's calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and that they might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Pray therefore that God would enlighten thy understanding; that will be a very great help unto thee. It will make thee endure many a hard brunt for Christ; as Paul saith, "After you were illuminated, ye endured a great sight of afflictions.—You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." If there be never such a rare jewel lie just in a man's way, yet if he sees it not, he will rather trample upon it than stoop for it, and it is because he sees it not. Why, so it is here, though heaven be worth never so much, and thou hast never so much need of it, yet if thou see it not, that is, have not thy understanding opened or enlightened to see, thou wilt not regard at all: therefore cry to the Lord for enlightening grace, and say, "Lord, open my blind eyes; Lord,

take the veil off my dark heart," show me the things of the other world, and let me see the sweetness, glory, and excellency of them for Christ's sake. This is the first.

The tenth direction. Cry to God that he would inflame thy will also with the things of the other world. For when a man's will is fully set to do such or such a thing, then it must be a very hard matter that shall hinder that man from bringing about his end. When Paul's will was set resolvedly to go up to Jerusalem (though it was signified to him before, what he should there suffer), he was not daunted at all; nay, saith he, "I am ready (or willing) not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." His will was inflamed with love to Christ; and therefore all the persuasions that could be used wrought nothing at all.

Your self-willed people nobody knows what to do with them: we use to say, He will have his own will, do all what you can. Indeed to have such a will for heaven, is an admirable advantage to a man that undertaketh a race thither; a man that is resolved, and hath his will fixed, saith he, I will do my best to advantage myself; I will do my worst to hinder my enemies; I will not give out as long as I can stand; I will have it or I will lose my life; "though he slay me yet will I trust in him. I will not let thee go except thou bless me." I will, I will, I will, O this blessed inflamed will for heaven! What is it like? If a man be willing, then any argument shall be matter of encouragement; but if unwilling, then any argument shall give discouragement; this is seen both in saints and sinners; in them that are the children of God, and also those that are the children of the devil. As,

1. The saints of old, they being willing and resolved for heaven, what could stop them? Could fire and faggot, sword or halter, stinking dungeons, whips, bears, bulls, lions, cruel rackings, stoning, starving, nakedness, &c., "and in all these things they were more than conquerors, through him

that loved them ;” who had also made them “willing in the day of his power.”

2. See again, on the other side, the children of the devil, because they are not willing, how many shifts and starting-holes they will have. I have married a wife, I have a farm, I shall offend my landlord, I shall offend my master, I shall lose my trading, I shall lose my pride, my pleasures, I shall be mocked and scoffed, therefore I dare not come. I, saith another, will stay till I am older, till my children are out, till I am got a little aforehand in the world, till I have done this and that, and the other business : but alas, the thing is, they are not willing ; for, were they but soundly willing, these, and a thousand such as these, would hold them no faster than the cords held Samson, when he broke them like burnt flax. I tell you the will is all : that is one of the chief things which turns the wheel either backwards or forwards ; and God knoweth that full well, and so likewise doth the devil ; and therefore they both endeavor very much to strengthen the will of their servants ; God, he is for making of his a willing people to serve him ; and the devil, he doth what he can to possess the will and affection of those that are his with love to sin ; and therefore when Christ comes close to the matter, indeed, saith he, “You will not come to me. How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens, but you would not.” The devil had possessed their wills, and so long he was sure enough of them. O therefore cry hard to God to inflame thy will for heaven and Christ : thy will, I say, if that be rightly set for heaven, thou wilt not be beat off with discouragements ; and this was the reason that when Jacob wrestled with the angel, though he lost a limb, as it were, and the hollow of his thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him, yet, saith he, “I will not,” mark, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me.” Get thy will tipt with the heavenly grace, and resolution against all discouragements, and then thou goest full



speed for heaven ; but if thou falter in thy will, and be not found there, thou wilt run hobbling and halting all the way thou runnest, and also to be sure thou wilt fall short at last. The Lord give thee a will and courage.

Thus have I done with directing thee how to run to the kingdom ; be sure thou keep in memory what I have said unto thee, lest thou lose thy way. But because I would have thee think of them, take all in short in this little bit of paper.

1. Get into the way. 2. Then study on it. 3. Then strip, and lay aside everything that would hinder. 4. Beware of by-paths. 5. Do not gaze and stare too much about thee, but be sure to ponder the path of thy feet. 6. Do not stop for any that call after thee, whether it be the world, the flesh, or the devil : for all these will hinder thy journey, if possible. 7. Be not daunted with any discouragements thou meetest with as thou goest. 8. Take heed of stumbling at the cross. 9. Cry hard to God for an enlightened heart, and a willing mind, and God give thee a prosperous journey.

Provocation. Now that you may be provoked to run with the foremost, take notice of this. When Lot and his wife were running from cursed Sodom to the mountains, to save their lives, it is said, that his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt ; and yet you see that neither her practice, nor the judgment of God that fell upon her for the same, would cause Lot to look behind him. I have sometimes wondered at Lot in this particular ; his wife looked behind her, and died immediately, but let what would become of her, Lot would not so much as look behind him to see her. We do not read that he did so much as once look where she was, or what was become of her ; his heart was indeed upon his journey, and well it might : there was the mountain before him, and the fire and brimstone behind him ; his life lay at stake, and he had lost it if he had but looked behind him. Do thou so run : and in thy race

remember Lot's wife, and remember her doom; and remember for what that doom did overtake her; and remember that God made her an example for all lazy runners, to the end of the world; and take heed thou fall not after the same example. But,

If this will not provoke thee, consider thus, 1. Thy soul is thy own soul, that is either to be saved or lost; thou shalt not lose my soul by thy laziness. It is thy own soul, thy own ease, thy own peace, thy own advantage or disadvantage. If it were my own that thou art desired to be good unto, methinks reason should move thee somewhat to pity it. But alas, it is thy own, thy own soul. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" God's people wish well to the souls of others, and wilt not thou wish well to thy own? And if this will not provoke thee, then think,

Again, 2. If thou lose thy soul, it is thou also that must bear the blame. It made Cain stark mad to consider that he had not looked to his brother Abel's soul. How much more will it perplex thee to think, that thou hadst not a care of thy own? And if this will not provoke thee to bestir thyself, think again,

3. That if thou wilt not run, the people of God are resolved to deal with thee even as Lot dealt with his wife, that is, leave thee behind them. It may be thou hast a father, mother, brother, &c., going post-haste to heaven, wouldst thou be willing to be left behind them? Surely no.

Again, 4. Will it not be a dishonor to thee to see the very boys and girls in the country to have more wit than thyself? It may be the servants of some men, as the horse-keeper, ploughman, scullion, &c., are more looking after heaven than their masters. I am apt to think, sometimes, that more servants than masters, that more tenants than landlords, will inherit the kingdom of heaven. But is not this a shame for them that are such? I am persuaded you

scorn, that your servants should say that they are wiser than you in the things of this world; and yet I am bold to say, that many of them are wiser than you in the things of the world to come, which are of greater concernment.

Expostulation. Well, then, sinner, what sayest thou? Where is thy heart? Wilt thou run? Art thou resolved to strip? Or art thou not? Think quickly, man, it is not dallying in this matter. Confer not with flesh and blood; look up to heaven, and see how thou likest it; also to hell (of which thou mayest understand something in my book, called, *A few sighs from hell*; or, *The groans of a damned soul*, which I wish thee to read seriously over), and accordingly devote thyself. If thou dost not know the way, inquire at the word of God; if thou wantest company, cry for God's Spirit; if thou wantest encouragement, entertain the promises. But be sure thou begin betimes; get into the way, run apace, and hold out to the end; and the Lord give thee a prosperous journey. FAREWELL.

## V.

### GOD'S LOVE TO FALLEN MAN.

WESLEY.

[For four generations, the Wesley family gave ministers of Puritan principles to the Church of England. The last and greatest of these was JOHN WESLEY, who was born at Epworth, Lincolnshire, June 17th 1703, and died in London, March 2d 1791. He graduated with distinction from Christ Church, Oxford, and was ordained priest in 1728. Of the origin of Methodism he relates: "In 1729 two young men in England, reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness; followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw, likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified; but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise a holy people." Yet he dates his own conversion to May 24th 1738, soon after his return from a missionary visit with the Moravians to Georgia. The remainder of his life is a wonderful record of Christian evangelization, patient industry, and herculean labors. Perhaps excepting the Apostle Paul, he was the chief missionary of the Gospel to the poor, meeting them in the churchyards, at their workshops, and in their homes. During these fifty-three years he travelled 225,000 miles, and preached more than 40,000 sermons—never missing a single appointment. Three million members, in the various Methodist sects are the living fruits of his labors. His writings are voluminous and of varying value, extending to thirty-two volumes. Clearness of thought, directness of address, and calmness of appeal, characterize his sermons.]

*"Not as the Transgression, so is the Free Gift."*—Romans v. 15.

How exceedingly common, and how bitter is the outcry against our first parent, for the mischief which he not only brought upon himself, but entailed upon his latest posterity! It was by his wilful rebellion against God, "that sin entered into the world." "By one man's disobedience," as the Apostle observes, *the many*, as many as were then in the loins of their forefathers, *were made*, or constituted *sinners*: not only deprived of the favor of God, but also of his im-

age; of all virtue, righteousness, and true holiness, and sunk partly into the image of the devil, in pride, malice, and all other diabolical tempers; partly into the image of the brute, being fallen under the dominion of brutal passions and grovelling appetites. Hence also Death entered into the world, with all his forerunners and attendants; pain, sickness, and a whole train of uneasy as well as unholy passions and tempers.

*"For all this we may thank Adam,"* has been echoed down from generation to generation. The self-same charge has been repeated in every age and every nation where the oracles of God are known, in which alone this grand and important event has been discovered to the children of men. Has not *your* heart, and probably *your* lips too, joined in the general charge? How few are there of those who believe the scriptural relation of the Fall of Man, that have not entertained the same thought concerning our first parent? Severely condemning him, that, through wilful disobedience to the sole command of his Creator,

*"Brought death into the world and all our woe."*

Nay, it were well if the charge rested here: but it is certain it does not. It cannot be denied that it frequently glances from Adam to his Creator. Have not thousands, even of those that are called Christians, taken the liberty to call his mercy, if not his justice also, into question, on this very account? Some indeed have done this a little more modestly, in an oblique and indirect manner: but others have thrown aside the mask, and asked, "Did not God foresee that Adam would abuse his liberty? And did he not know the baneful consequences which this must naturally have on all his posterity? And why then did he permit that disobedience? Was it not easy for the Almighty to have prevented it?" He certainly did foresee the whole. This cannot be denied. "For known unto God are all his works from the beginning

of the world." (Rather from all eternity, as the words *ἀπ' αἰῶνος* properly signify.) And it was undoubtedly in his power to prevent it; for he hath all power both in heaven and earth. But it was known to him at the same time, that it was best upon the whole not to prevent it. He knew, that, "not as the transgression, so is the free gift:" that the evil resulting from the former was not as the good resulting from the latter, not worthy to be compared with it. He saw that to permit the fall of the first man was far best for mankind in general: that abundantly more good than evil would accrue to the posterity of Adam by his fall: that if "sin abounded" thereby over all the earth, yet grace "would much more abound:" yea, and that to every individual of the human race, unless it was his own choice.

It is exceedingly strange that hardly anything has been written, or at least published, on this subject: nay, that it has been so little weighed or understood by the generality of Christians: especially considering that it is not a matter of mere curiosity, but a truth of the deepest importance; it being impossible, on any other principle,

"To assert a gracious Providence,"  
And justify the ways of God with men:"

and considering withal, how plain this important truth is, to all sensible and candid inquirers. May the Lover of Men open the eyes of our understanding, to perceive clearly that by the fall of Adam mankind in general have gained a capacity,

First, of being more holy and happy on earth, and,

Secondly, of being more happy in heaven than otherwise they could have been.

And, first, mankind in general have gained by the fall of Adam, a capacity of attaining more holiness and happiness on earth than it would have been possible for them to attain if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not

fallen, Christ had not died. Nothing can be more clear than this: nothing more undeniable: the more thoroughly we consider the point, the more deeply shall we be convinced of it. Unless all the partakers of human nature had received that deadly wound in Adam, it would not have been needful for the Son of God to take our nature upon him. Do you not see that this was the very ground of his coming into the world? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And thus death passed upon all" through him, "in whom all men sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) Was it not to remedy this very thing, that "the Word was made flesh?" that "as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive?" Unless, then, *many* had been made sinners by the disobedience of one, by the obedience of one, *many* would not have been *made righteous*. (Ver. 18.) So there would have been no room for that amazing display of the Son of God's love to mankind. There would have been no occasion for his "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It could not then have been said, to the astonishment of all the hosts of heaven, "God so loved the world," yea, the ungodly world, which had no thought or desire of returning to him, "that he gave his Son" out of his bosom, his only begotten Son, "to the end that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Neither could we then have said, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself:" or that he "made him to be sin," that is, a *sin-offering* "for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him." There would have been no such occasion for such "an Advocate with the Father," as "Jesus Christ the Righteous:" neither for his appearing "at the right hand of God, to make intercession for us."

What is the necessary consequence of this? It is this: there could then have been no such thing as faith in God, *thus loving the world*, giving his only Son for us men, and

for our salvation. There could have been no such thing as faith in the Son of God, "as loving us and giving himself for us." There could have been no faith in the Spirit of God, as renewing the image of God in our hearts, as raising us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. Indeed, the whole privilege of justification by faith could have no existence; there could have been no redemption in the blood of Christ: neither could Christ have been "made of God unto us," either "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, or redemption."

And the same grand blank which was in our faith, must likewise have been in our love. We might have loved the Author of our being, the Father of angels and men, as our Creator and Preserver: we might have said, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" But we could not have loved him under the nearest and dearest relation, "as delivering up his Son for us all." We might have loved the Son of God, as being the "brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person": (although this ground seems to belong rather to the inhabitants of heaven than earth.) But we could not have loved him as "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," and "by that one oblation of himself once offered, making a full oblation, sacrifice, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." We could not have been "made conformable to his death," nor "have known the power of his resurrection." We could not have loved the Holy Ghost as revealing to us the Father and the Son, as opening the eyes of our understanding, bringing us out of darkness into his marvellous light, renewing the image of God in our soul, and sealing us unto the day of redemption. So that, in truth, what is now "in the sight of God, even the Father," not of fallible men, "pure religion and undefiled," would then have had no being: inasmuch as it wholly depends on those grand principles, "By grace ye are saved through faith:" and "Jesus



Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

We see then what unspeakable advantage we derive from the fall of our first parent, with regard to faith: faith both in God the Father, who spared not his own Son, his only Son, but "wounded him for our transgressions," and "bruised him for our iniquities:" and in God the Son, who poured out his soul for us transgressors, and washed us in his own blood. We see what advantage we derive therefrom with regard to the love of God, both of God the Father, and God the Son. The chief ground of this love, as long as we remain in the body, is plainly declared by the Apostle, "We love him, because he first loved us." But the greatest instance of his love had never been given, if Adam had not fallen.

And as our faith, both in God the Father and the Son, receives an unspeakable increase, if not its very being, from this grand event, as does also our love both of the Father and the Son: so does the love of our neighbor also, our benevolence to all mankind: which cannot but increase in the same proportion with our faith and love of God. For who does not apprehend the force of that inference drawn by the loving Apostle, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." If God so loved us—observe, the stress of the argument lies on this very point: *so loved us!* as to deliver up his only Son to die a cursed death for our salvation. "Beloved, what manner of love is this," wherewith God hath loved us? So as to give his *only Son!* In glory equal with the Father: in majesty co-eternal! What manner of love is this wherewith the only begotten Son of God hath loved us, as to *empty himself*, as far as possible, of his eternal Godhead; as to divest himself of that glory, which he had with the Father before the world began; as to "take upon him the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man!" And then to humble

himself still further, "being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" If God so loved us, how ought we to love one another? But this motive to brotherly love had been totally wanting, if Adam had not fallen. Consequently we could not then have loved one another in so high a degree as we may now. Nor could there have been that height and depth in the command of our Blessed Lord, "As I have loved you, so love one another."

Such gainers may we be by Adam's fall, with regard both to the love of God and of our neighbor. But there is another grand point, which, though little adverted to, deserves our deepest consideration. By that one act of our first parent, not only "sin entered into the world," but pain also, and was alike entailed on his whole posterity. And herein appeared, not only the justice, but the unspeakable goodness of God. For how much good does he continually bring out of this evil! How much holiness and happiness out of pain!

How innumerable are the benefits which God conveys to the children of men through the channel of sufferings! So that it might well be said, "What are termed afflictions in the language of men, are in the language of God styled blessings." Indeed had there been no suffering in the world, a considerable part of religion, yea, and in some respects, the most excellent part, could have had no place therein: since the very existence of it depends on our suffering: so that had there been no pain, it could have had no being. Upon this foundation, even our suffering, it is evident all our passive graces are built; yea, the noblest of all Christian graces, *love enduring all things*. Here is the ground for resignation to God, enabling us to say from the heart, in every trying hour, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" And what a glorious spectacle is this? Did it not constrain even a heathen to

cry out, "*Ecce spectaculum Deo dignum!* See a sight worthy of God: a good man struggling with adversity, and superior to it." Here is the ground for confidence in God, both with regard to what we feel, and with regard to what we should fear, were it not that our soul is calmly stayed on him. What room could there be for trust in God, if there was no such thing as pain or danger? Who might not say then, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is by sufferings that our faith is tried, and, therefore, made more acceptable to God. It is in the day of trouble that we have occasion to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." And this is well pleasing to God, that we should own him in the face of danger; in defiance of sorrow, sickness, pain, or death.

Again: Had there been neither natural nor moral evil in the world, what must have become of patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering? It is manifest they could have had no being: seeing all these have evil for their object. If, therefore, evil had never entered into the world, neither could these have had any place in it. For who could have *returned good for evil*, had there been no evil-doer in the universe? How had it been possible, on that supposition, to *overcome evil with good*? Will you say, "But all these graces might have been divinely infused into the hearts of men." Undoubtedly they might: but if they had, there would have been no use or exercise for them. Whereas in the present state of things we can never long want occasion to exercise them. And the more they are exercised, the more all our graces are strengthened and increased. And in the same proportion as our resignation, our confidence in God, our patience and fortitude, our meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, together with our faith and love of God and man increase, must our happiness increase, even in the present world.

Yet again: As God's permission of Adam's fall gave all

his posterity a thousand opportunities of *suffering*, and thereby of exercising all those passive graces which increase both their holiness and happiness: so it gives them opportunities of *doing good* in numberless instances, of exercising themselves in various good works, which otherwise could have had no being. And what exertions of benevolence, of compassion, of godlike mercy, had then been totally prevented! Who could then have said to the lover of men,

“Thy mind throughout my life be shown,  
While listening to the wretches' cry,  
The widow's or the orphan's groan;  
On mercy's wings I swiftly fly,  
The poor and needy to relieve;  
Myself, my all, for them to give?”

It is the just observation of a benevolent man,

———“All worldly joys are less,  
Than that one joy of doing kindnesses.”

Surely *in keeping* this commandment, if no other, there is great reward. “As we have time, let us do good unto all men;” good of every kind and in every degree. Accordingly the more good we do (other circumstances being equal), the happier we shall be. The more we deal our bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with garments; the more we relieve the stranger, and visit them that are sick or in prison: the more kind offices we do to those that groan under the various evils of human life: the more comfort we receive even in the present world; the greater the recompense we have in our own bosom.

To sum up what has been said under this head: As the more holy we are upon earth, the more happy we must be (seeing there is an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness); as the more good we do to others, the more of present reward redounds into our own bosom: even as our sufferings for God lead us to *rejoice* in him “with joy

unspeakable and full of glory:" therefore, the fall of Adam, First, by giving us an opportunity of being far more holy; Secondly, by giving us the occasions of doing innumerable good works, which otherwise could not have been done; and, Thirdly, by putting it into our power to suffer for God, whereby "the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us:" may be of such advantage to the children of men, even in the present life, as they will not thoroughly comprehend till they attain life everlasting.

It is then we shall be enabled fully to comprehend, not only the advantages which accrue at the present time to the sons of men by the fall of their first Parent, but the infinitely greater advantages which they may reap from it in eternity. In order to form some conception of this, we may remember the observation of the Apostle, "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." The most glorious stars will undoubtedly be those who are the most holy; who bear most of that image of God wherein they were created. The next in glory to these will be those who have been most abundant in good works: and next to them, those that have suffered most, according to the will of God. But what advantages in every one of these respects, will the children of God receive in heaven, by God's permitting the introduction of pain upon earth, in consequence of sin? By occasion of this they attained many holy tempers, which otherwise could have had no being: resignation to God, confidence in him in times of trouble and danger, patience, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering, and the whole train of passive virtues. And on account of this superior holiness they will then enjoy superior happiness. Again: every one will then "receive his own reward, according to his own labor." Every individual will be "rewarded according to his work." But the fall gave rise to innumerable good works, which could otherwise never have existed, such as ministering to the necessities

of the saints, yea, relieving the distressed in every kind. And hereby innumerable stars will be added to their eternal crown. Yet again: there will be an abundant reward in heaven, for *suffering*, as well as for *doing*, the will of God: "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Therefore that event, which occasioned the entrance of suffering into the world, has thereby occasioned, to all the children of God, an increase of glory to all eternity. For although the sufferings themselves will be at an end: although

"The pain of life shall then be o'er,  
The anguish and distracting care;  
The sighing grief shall weep no more;  
And sin shall never enter there:"—

yet the joys occasioned thereby shall never end, but flow at God's right hand for evermore.

There is one advantage more that we reap from Adam's fall, which is not unworthy our attention. Unless in Adam all had died, being in the loins of their first Parent, every descendant of Adam, every child of man, must have personally answered for himself to God: it seems to be a necessary consequence of this, that if he had once fallen, once violated any command of God, there would have been no possibility of his rising again; there was no help, but he must have perished without remedy. For that Covenant knew not to show mercy: the word was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now who would not rather be on the footing he is now; under a covenant of mercy? Who would wish to hazard a whole eternity upon one stake? Is it not infinitely more desirable, to be in a state wherein, though encompassed with infirmities, yet we do not run such a desperate risk, but if we fall, we may rise again? Wherein we may say,

"My trespass is grown up to heaven!  
But, far above the skies,  
In Christ abundantly forgiven,  
I see thy mercies rise!"

In Christ! Let me entreat every serious person, once more to fix his attention here. All that has been said, all that can be said, on these subjects, centres in this point. The fall of Adam produced the death of Christ! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! Yea,

“Let earth and heaven agree,  
Angels and men be joined,  
To celebrate with me  
The Saviour of mankind;  
To adore the all-atoning Lamb,  
And bless the sound of Jesu's Name!”

If God had prevented the fall of man, *The Word* had never been *made flesh*: nor had we ever “seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” Those mysteries had never been displayed, “which the very angels desire to look into.” Methinks this consideration swallows up all the rest, and should never be out of our thoughts. Unless “by one man, judgment had come upon all men to condemnation,” neither angels nor men could ever have known “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

See then, upon the whole, how little reason we have to repine at the fall of our first Parent, since herefrom we may derive such unspeakable advantages, both in time and eternity. See how small pretence there is for questioning the mercy of God in permitting that event to take place! Since therein, mercy, by infinite degrees, rejoices over judgment! Where, then, is the man that presumes to blame God, for not preventing Adam's sin? Should we not rather bless him from the ground of the heart, for therein laying the grand scheme of man's redemption, and making way for that glorious manifestation of his wisdom, holiness, justice, and mercy? If indeed God had decreed before the foundation of the world, that millions of men should dwell in everlasting burnings, because Adam sinned, hundreds or thousands of years before they had a being; I know not who

could thank him for this, unless the devil and his angels: seeing, on this supposition, all those millions of unhappy spirits would be plunged into hell by Adam's sin, without any possible advantage from it. But, blessed be God, this is not the case. Such a decree never existed. On the contrary, every one born of a woman, may be an unspeakable gainer thereby: and none ever was or can be a loser, but by his own choice.

We see here a full answer to that plausible account "of the origin of evil," published to the world some years since, and supposed to be unanswerable: that it "necessarily resulted from the nature of matter, which God was not able to alter." It is very kind in this sweet-tongued orator to make an excuse for God! But there is really no occasion for it: God hath answered for himself. He made man in his own image, a spirit endued with understanding and liberty. Man abusing that liberty, produced evil; brought sin and pain into the world. This God permitted, in order to a fuller manifestation of his wisdom, justice, and mercy, by bestowing on all who would receive it an infinitely greater happiness than they could possibly have attained, if Adam had not fallen.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Although a thousand particulars of "his judgments, and of his ways are unsearchable" to us, and *past our finding out*, yet we may discern the general scheme, running through time into eternity. "According to the council of his own will," the plan he had laid before the foundation of the world, he created the parent of all mankind in his own image. And he permitted *all men* to be *made sinners by the disobedience of this one man*, that, *by the obedience of one*, all who receive the free gift, may be infinitely holier and happier to all eternity!



## VI.

### THE BELIEVER'S PORTION IN CHRIST.

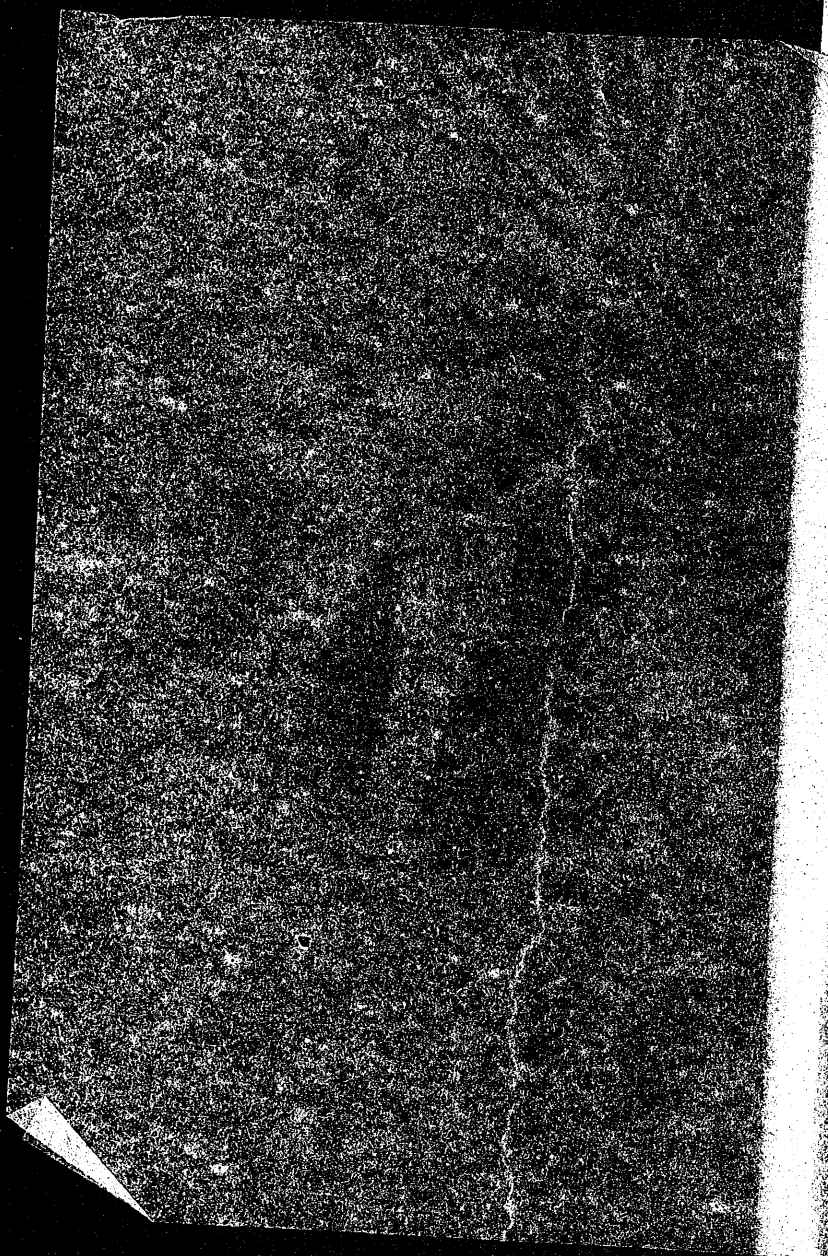
McILVAINE.

[RT. REV. CHARLES PETTIT McILVAINE, D. D., D. C. L., president of the American Tract Society, was born at Burlington, New Jersey, January 18th 1799. In his seventeenth year, he graduated at Nassau Hall, Princeton. From 1825 to 1827, he was chaplain and professor of ethics at West Point. While rector of St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn, in 1831, he delivered in the University of New York a series of admirable lectures on the historical "Evidences of Christianity." In published form, these have had a deserved popularity at home and abroad. He was consecrated Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Ohio the following year. By speech and pen, he has ever allied himself with the whole Church of Christ, well saying: "We drop our denomination uniform when we undress at the grave." Although now past threescore and ten, Bishop McIlvaine lately crossed the Atlantic to intercede with the Czar of Russia for the religious rights of his Protestant subjects. He died at Florence, Italy, March 13th 1873. From a series of twenty-two of his discourses in "The Truth and the Life," we take the following sermon, by permission.]

*"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. i. 12.*

It is as much the duty of the Christian to give thanks, as to pray, unto the Father. If we are commanded to "*pray without ceasing,*" we are also commanded "*in everything to give thanks.*" In everything, it is a great matter of thankfulness, that we are permitted, enabled, and so graciously encouraged, to pray. A sinner permitted to live under the invitations of the Gospel, instead of being condemned to live eternally where only the wrath of God abideth, can never in anything lack a theme of thanksgiving. But a sinner whose heart has been drawn by the grace of God to the embracing of the invitations of the Gospel; whose heart







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has been so changed by the power of God, that he is now made *meet* to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, having in that very condition of his heart, the indwelling earnest and witness of the Spirit that he will finally become a partaker in that glorious inheritance; he surely must in everything give thanks; no adversity, no affliction, must ever hide from his sight his boundless debt of praise, to the riches of the grace of God to his soul; all his life long, he must be so deeply sensible of the preciousness of his hope in Christ, and of the wonderful mercy of God in bringing him thereto, out of the sinfulness and condemnation of his unconverted state, as to make it his heart's delight to give thanks unto the Father, who thus hath made him "meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

In considering the words of the text, let us attend:

I. *To the manner in which the future blessedness of the people of God is presented:* an "*inheritance*"—"the inheritance of the saints"—"the inheritance of the saints *in light*."

The portion of the people of God is an *inheritance*. They are called elsewhere, "heirs of salvation," "heirs of the kingdom." "He that overcometh, shall *inherit* all things." Christ will say to his people in the last day: "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Now there is a great Gospel truth contained in this word *inheritance*. It teaches that the future portion of the righteous, is not their *purchase*. They do not obtain it on the basis of merit, but of relationship. They do not make themselves heirs; but they are made heirs by the will and favor of their Heavenly Father. A father makes a son his heir, not because the son has merited the inheritance, but because he is a son, a dear son. Thus it is written: "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." If children of God, then heirs of God—

children by adoption, taken up out of a miserable beggary, and adopted as God's dear children, and thus made inheritors of himself as our boundless portion. But this is not all: "joint heirs with Christ." If God's children, then Christ's brethren; and in virtue of that union with Christ, we inherit jointly with him. In ourselves, we can have no title to the inheritance. In Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the sons, by adoption, have a most perfect, indefeasible title. He, in his mediatorial office, is "heir of all things." We, in him, shall inherit all things. Thus it is that such glorious things are spoken of the future possession of his people. "To him that overcometh," he saith, "I will grant to sit with me on my throne;" not merely in my kingdom, but on my throne; not merely to share the blessings of my kingdom, but to share the glory of its king; my brethren in glory, my joint heirs in all that I inherit of my Father. Thus it is written, that "his people shall reign with him," "shall be glorified together" with him, and that God doth make them "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In the last day, when our Lord shall be receiving his people to himself, his words to each will be, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," into mine own joy, which thou dost inherit, because thou art in me and I in thee. And when he shall have thus gathered together all his beloved ones that believe in him, to be with him where he is, to be glorified with him and in him, then shall his own inheritance of joy be completed in their salvation and blessedness—all having come, "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

And thus we see how much of the portion of the people of God in the world to come, is described, in its being called an *inheritance*. It teaches how that portion is all of grace; how it results simply from our having received "the adoption of sons;" how necessary as the evidence of our title is "*the*

*spirit of adoption*" in our hearts; and how, since our inheritance is a joint inheritance with that of Christ, we must look only to his merits for the title, and to a vital union with him through faith that we may share therein. It teaches, moreover, what St. Paul calls the "riches of the glory" of that inheritance. What description of *riches of glory* can exceed that of simply telling us we shall be "*joint heirs with Christ*?"

We have in the text another feature of the future bliss. It is called the "inheritance of *the saints*."

✱ The saints are the "sanctified in Christ Jesus." To none else is the inheritance, and in that exclusiveness do we see much of its excellence. It is thus an inheritance "*undefiled*." None are there but those whom God hath perfectly sanctified. All there have "the mind of Christ in its perfectness." It is a Church which he hath sanctified and cleansed, "that he might present it unto himself, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Sin enters not into that inheritance, sorrow goes not thither. Tears have no fountain there. "No spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing" upon the white raiment of that holy fellowship. Holy ones made perfect are the only dwellers there. "The former things are passed away." The Church of Christ will not then be as now, a church defiled; tied to a body of death; the living mingled everywhere with the dead; the Christian of a vital faith, and the Christian of a mere lifeless form, united under the same profession of discipleship; the children of this world communing outwardly with the true, but imperfect family of God. Oh! no. Nor will the true Church be then so far defiled as to contain any such members as its best are in this life; holy indeed essentially, but so imperfectly holy; saints indeed, because truly sanctified in Christ Jesus—but saints conscious of coming so far short in holiness, that they seem to themselves to be all spot and wrinkle, and every such thing. All things will then have become new—not only as being holy, but as being all



perfectly holy. "The spirits of just men made perfect," is the description of that fellowship. Oh! it is precious to think of a heritage so excluding all unholiness. But it is most alarming for you, my hearers, in whom the work of holiness is not commenced.

While however it is good to think of that inheritance as *exclusive* of all but saints, we love to think of it as *inclusive* of all that are saints. We drop our denomination uniform when we undress at the grave. It belongs to those things that are seen and are *temporal*. We enter into eternal life in no raiment but the white robe of Christ, which is the righteousness of all that are sanctified in him, and belongs to those things which are unseen and *eternal*. If it be necessary to this most imperfect state of the Church, that we should be divided as we now are; it is good to think of it as a humiliation which can last only while we are here. The grave will cover it with our corruptible bodies. The only name to be inquired for, in ascertaining the inheritors of Christ, is *saints*—the sanctified—those who have been born again of the Spirit of God, and are walking in newness of life. Bring them from the east, and west, and north, and south—from all generations, from out of all divisions of the Christian family, from under any name, or form! Each has his lot in that good land. All inherit by the same title in Christ; and therefore all "inherit all things." In the poverty of earthly inheritances, the more one heir obtains, the less all others have. But in the fullness of the inheritance of the saints, each inherits all, as if there were no heir but himself—or rather because all inherit as one body in Christ. Oh! it is a most blessed heritage that shall assemble together in one most affectionate, holy household, such a boundless fellowship of the people of God, out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues; all seeing eye to eye; all feeling heart to heart; all children of the same redeeming grace; all brethren of the same wondrous adoption in Christ; all

most glorious in his likeness; "the communion of saints" in its perfectness; "the Catholic Church" in its fullness; "the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

But there is another feature of the inheritance. It is the inheritance of the saints *in light*. In light! What so pure as perfect light? Whence all the varied beauties of nature, but from light? Light is an expression for God himself, its Maker. "God is light." It describes his people here; they are "children of light." It describes their progressive advancement in grace; their path is pictured in scripture "as the morning light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And here it describes their future glory, when their path shall have reached meridian—the perfect day; they shall be saints *in light*. God is light; and they shall be like him, and see him as he is.

But how shall we understand this description of the inheritance? I read it as having reference to the comparison between the perfect state of the saints in heaven, in point of spiritual knowledge, and their imperfect state while here on earth; just what the same Apostle referred to, when he said, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part; then shall we know even as we are known." Now we see by aid of a glass—a revelation, an instrumental medium. We see at a distance, at second hand. A thousand motes and mists hinder our vision of spiritual and eternal things. Constant vapors rise up from earth and our own evil natures, to obscure our vision. At best, we know but in part—nothing entirely; nor can we know how little we are capable of knowing of that boundless field. But then we shall see face to face, in open, boundless vision. We shall dwell with God, in the light which no man can now approach unto. We shall know without tuition, see without a medium, understand without interpreter—"saints in light."

Thus I understand that description of the city of God in the Revelation of St. John. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

God is light—its fountain, its fullness; and what need of lesser lights in heaven, when he is there? They will need no sun nor moon; in other words, no intervening medium of communication from God to them. Their communion with "God and the Lamb" will be "face to face." Now, we do need the aid of the sun and moon—we depend upon secondary lights. In this world we must walk by faith, not by sight, and must have the aid of *means* of grace. What are the ministers of the world; what the sacraments of the Church; what the revelation contained in the scriptures, but parts of a system of *instrumental* secondary lights, teaching us that we see not yet face to face; that however great our knowledge and privileges, compared with what they would have been without those aids; however sufficient and most precious our revelation for all the present necessities of the soul, we are far yet from the perfect day. Ministers, and sacramental signs, and a written inspired word, are marks of the Church in the wilderness. God is with her, but in the pillar of cloud. They are marks of a state of grace not yet complete. God is communicating with his people, but it is from behind the veil of the inner sanctuary. But the Church in glory will have no need of human ministry, nor of visible signs of spiritual grace, nor of an inspired book, revealing, under the imperfections of human language, the things of the Spirit of God. The saints being "heirs of God," their portion will be therefore his fullness. God is light—original, perfect, boundless light. They will commune directly with that light, that holiness, that truth, that infinite knowledge, that boundless wisdom. They will be saints in light, because saints in the full vision of God. In contemplating that blessed estate, Isaiah dipped his pen in

the same effulgence as St. John, and wrote: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." How sweet that sentence, "the days of thy mourning shall be ended"! St. John's account of it is: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." We know not which description is the most engaging—that of the evangelical prophet, or of the prophetic evangelist? Neither could speak of the light of that inheritance of the saints, without telling how it would banish all the sorrows which sin has brought upon our hearts, even to the drying up of the last tear; just as all the remnants of night, even to the last drop of dew, are wiped from the face of nature by the radiance of the sun.

But we must come to the second division of our discourse. St. Paul, in the text, unites with his fellow Christians in giving thanks unto the Father, because he had made them *meet*, or fit—qualified in Spirit, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints. And from this we take our second head.

II. We cannot partake in that blessedness, unless we are first, by the transforming grace of God, in this present life, *made meet* for it.

One would suppose it could hardly be needful to use many words to demonstrate so plain a truth. We really partake in nothing unless we are *meet* to be partakers. A sick man cannot partake in a sumptuous feast. It will not be a feast to him; he is not *meet* for it. A man without an ear attuned to musical sounds, may sit in the midst of the richest harmonies; but he cannot partake in them, however he may hear them. Take a man of grovelling mind, and place him in a circle of the most refined and intellectual; bid him associate his mind with theirs. You might as well command the deaf to hear, or the blind to see. How irksome that

company! You easily perceive the reason. His mind is not fitted, his tastes are not qualified, for such privileges. Well, then, suppose I should find a little company of saints made perfect, come down from heaven, on some errand from God, to earth, and keeping here for a little while their endless Sabbath of holiness and happiness, as they keep it in heaven; and suppose I should take a man of the world, such as we meet with everywhere—his affections all running upon earthly things, all confined to earthly things, and set him down in that circle, and say to him, “Now, partake in their happiness. You think that all you need to make you happy hereafter, is only to be admitted to heaven. Try! Here is a little of heaven; join those blessed ones in their joys, in their sweet communion with God; in their overflowing love to Christ; in their praises to him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and hath made them kings and priests unto God.” Why, one might as well speak to the dead. Not a chord is there in his heart to harmonize with their joys. He is all strange in his sympathies to them, and they to him. How would he like to have nothing else but their company and their pleasures, with his own present dispositions, for ever and ever? What heaven would that be to him? His whole moral being must be changed, before he can be meet to partake with the saints of God on high in their holy blessedness. And so long as that change is not wrought, no decree of God is needed to shut him out of the presence of his glory, or the fellowship of the heavenly host. A decree powerful enough is written in the man’s own affections. His own heart excludes him. A mere title to heaven would not help him. What if he should even be allowed to come to the table of that heavenly feast? He could not partake. He would sit there all deaf, and dumb, and dead, amidst boundless life.

My dear hearers, let us well understand what constitutes

salvation. Two things are essential, and both are brought to view in the connection of our text. St. Paul, speaking of Jesus, says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even *the forgiveness of sins*." That is one of the two—*forgiveness of sins*. It opens the door to the habitation of the saints in light. Very precious, indeed, but it is not all. Then, in the text, we have those who have obtained the forgiveness of sins, that open door, now giving thanks for another thing, namely, that they have been made "*meet to be partakers of the inheritance*" to which that door admits them. That is the second of the two great gifts which make up our salvation. The one removes the barrier on the side of the broken law; the other, the barrier on the side of our own corrupt, carnal nature. The first is taken away in God's being reconciled to us through the mediation of Christ. The second is taken away in our hearts being reconciled to God by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. They come inseparably. Neither is ever without the other. They come both out of the great sacrifice on the cross. Faith draws both together from him who "was wounded for our transgressions, and by whose stripes we are healed"—"*the water and the blood*." Whom God justifies, he also sanctifies. In whom these two are united, the forgiveness of sins and the meetness for the inheritance, in them is salvation. They are *saints*. In whom both are perfected, salvation is consummated. They are *saints* made perfect.

But what is that meetness for the inheritance of the saints? It is surely *likeness* to the inheritance. It is conformity of our affections to the nature of the blessedness. Is that blessedness the presence and glory of God? Then the meetness for it is to be holy, since God is holy. Is it a joint inheritance with Christ? Then to be meet for it, is to be like Christ; to have his mind in us, that his joy may be in us. It is to be assimilated to him in our affections, that

we may be associated with him in his heritage. It is to be not of the world, even as he is not of the world. It is to have our affections set on things above, "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." It is to be "dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is to love the will and service of God as our present happiness; to know by our present experience the sweetness of communion with him as his own children; to have such a sense of the preciousness of Christ to our souls, that we can participate with some degree of real consciousness in that declaration of the early believers: "Whom, having not seen, we love; in whom though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Vast, indeed, is the difference between that meetness for the inheritance which believers in their highest sanctification, this side the grave, possess, and that of those who have now entered into possession. It seems, indeed, that it must take a mighty work of grace to make any Christian now on earth, with all our infirmities and remaining sinfulness, capable of the presence of God in his manifested glory. So it must, unquestionably. The eye that has never seen "the things of the Spirit of God" but "through a glass darkly," must needs undergo a mighty change of capacity before it is capable of looking on all those wonderful and glorious mysteries, face to face. The heart that has never communed with the holiness and majesty of God, but on this side the veil, must needs be prepared with a vast measure of new adaptation before it can bear to be introduced to the presence of that unveiled, infinite holiness and glory, on which even the seraphim look not with open face.

But the change required is only like that of a child that is now meet essentially for the inheritance of his father, because he is a true child, with all the faculties of a child; but who must attain to manhood, and have all those faculties

matured, before he can be ready to enter into full possession of the inheritance. What would you say of the meetness of an infant to possess, and manage, and enjoy, a magnificent estate inherited from his father? But in one most important sense that infant is meet. He has the mind—he has the faculties. All he wants is, their development, their ripening, their manhood. The essential preparation he has. It is only the perfecting he needs. You have not to change what he is, but simply to mature it.

And thus we understand the present meetness of the Christian in the imperfectness of his earthly state, for the presence of the glory of God in heaven. What though but the youngest child in grace, however old in years—just born again of the Spirit—just beginning the experience of newness of life—every affection and faculty of his heart in infant feebleness, but all nevertheless in living reality? Great indeed is the growth he must make, now that he has just opened his eyes upon such light as comes to us here in this moonlight night, before he can be qualified for the light of that city, where moon and sun are invisible by reason of the light of the unveiled countenance of God.

But still we can join that child in grace in giving thanks unto the Father who *hath* (already) made him “meet to be a partaker with the saints in light.” He is meet, because he is God’s regenerate and adopted child. He is meet, because he has all the mind, and heart, and sympathies, and relations, of a child of God. He is meet, essentially, though not maturely. The time to enter upon the inheritance has not yet come. He who has now given him the spirit of adoption, and made him his child, when that time does come, will give him the spirit, and stature, and perfectness, of a full-grown son, that he may inherit the kingdom prepared for him. As his day, so shall his grace be. Meanwhile, his calling is that of a child of God in minority and pupilage; to see the inheritance only in reversion, and in the distance;



to live in the hope of it, and to be educated for it; and God giveth him grace for *that* need. When his calling shall be to go hence from the nursery of spiritual childhood, and take his place in the full citizenship of "the commonwealth of Israel;" to stand in the General Assembly and Church of the First-born" in heaven; to minister as one of the "royal priesthood" in the immediate presence of the Majesty on High, then also shall his grace be as his day. His meetness will grow with his privilege. When God shall take him to the highest place, he will bring forth the best robe and put it on him.

Oh! but what a difference there is between the change which that child of God must undergo to make his present feebleness of holy attainment meet for the fullness of the future inheritance; and, on the other hand, the change that must take place in that man, in whom not a feature, not an affection, not a sympathy, not a faculty, of the child of God has ever found a place! In the former case, it is only a change from morning to noon—the day is the same. It is only a transition from the child to the man; the being is the same. But in the latter, it must be a change from night to day, from death to life; from the man who is in no sense a child of God, to the man who is in everything his living, loving child. In the former case, death is the certain introduction to the full completion of the glorious advancement. In the latter, death, finding the essential change not made, sets the seal to the certainty of its never being made to all eternity.

And now, would you be told how that meetness for the inheritance of the saints is obtained? I answer, it is no endowment of our natural state. All the meetness of this fallen and depraved nature of ours is for the inheritance of the unholy in darkness everlasting. The mind that is in man by nature, and the mind that is in the wicked and lost in hell, is essentially the same mind; just as the mind of

the Christian here, and of the saint with God, is essentially the same. I doubt not there is an awful maturity of wickedness in hell, for which the unregenerate in this world are not prepared in point of present growth. It would shock them, were it now seen by the worst of them: just as in "the brightness of the Father's glory," as seen by the saints in light, there is a manifestation for which the regenerate on earth, in point of maturity of grace, are not meet. But in every unregenerate man here, there is "the carnal mind," which "is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." That is all that is needed. The meetness for the fellowship of the lost is thus in him essentially. It needs but development. Change of worlds, from a place of hope to a prison of despair; from a condition of a thousand corrective and restraining influences, to one where none exist, and where every pent-up corruption of the heart is set loose, and set on fire, to range and rage without limit—such change will soon consummate the meetness of a lost soul, for all the wickedness and misery of the outer darkness.

Do you ask again, whence comes that essential meetness for the inheritance of the saints, which I have described as the possession of every child of God in this world? The answer is in our text. St. Paul, with his fellow-Christians, said, "Giving thanks *unto the Father, which hath made us meet,*" &c. They ascribed all they had of preparation for the inheritance, to the power of God. He *made* them what they were, as Christians. "We are *his workmanship* (they said), created in Christ Jesus."

So mighty a change as that which forms out of such a being as man, in all the depravity of his natural heart, a being meet to associate with Christ and his saints, they could ascribe to no power less than God's. He who created man originally in his own likeness, that he might qualify him for

his own fellowship, now that we have lost that likeness, must by the same power create us anew, or we cannot be heirs of God. Hence that strong declaration, "If any man be in Christ;" if out of all mankind there be a true Christian, a child of God, a joint heir with Christ, "he is a new creature." The work that made him what he is, was a new creation. The power that made him what he is, was the power that created the heavens and the earth.

Of the like testimony are these joyful words of St. Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." What prepared them for such an inheritance? They were "begotten again." Who accomplished that new birth in them? "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," in his abundant mercy. That new birth made them his children. That relation of children connected them with the inheritance. "If children, then heirs." Invert this sentence and it will be equally true and important—If heirs, then children. Add—If children, then begotten again by the Spirit of God. Add further—If not so begotten again, then ye cannot see the kingdom of God.

Oh, what alarming conclusions necessarily follow from all we have said, in regard to the hopelessness of those of you, my hearers, in whom no such inward, transforming work of grace is found! How painful to be obliged to draw such lines of exclusion from the blessed heritage in prospect! But we have this alleviation and comfort, that the line is not yet so drawn as never to be crossed. You that find it marking you off from the fellowship of the kingdom, you may cross it yet, if you will strive; the hand of God is outstretched to lift you over when you strive. And it is by this painful plainness in drawing that line before you, and showing where it places you, that we hope, by the blessing of the Holy

Ghost, to contribute to the raising up of a fixed determination in your hearts, that by the grace of God you will overpass it, and so gain a place among the inheritors of life.

But what precious encouragement and assurance there is in all we have said, to those who, having the love of God in them, and habitually loving his ways, are thus prepared essentially to be with him in glory! Their pleasure of heart in his word and worship, and whole service; their love of holiness, and earnestness to have more holiness, is "the earnest of the Spirit." It witnesses with their spirit, that they are children, and therefore heirs of God. The Lord "gives grace and glory;" glory, the maturity of grace; grace, the promise and preparation for glory; both where there is either. The one, the first fruits of the Spirit; the other, the fullness of the ripe harvest of grace. As sure as we have now the one, we shall hereafter possess the other. The heart that ascends to God amid the infirmities of the flesh, will go to God when the flesh shall encumber it no more. To be meet for the inheritance, is the assurance of obtaining it. He that fashions you for it, will certainly take you to it. Then be joyful in God, and praise him for the riches of his grace! So run that ye may obtain. So seek that ye may find. So press toward the mark of the prize, that ye may be sure of the blessedness promised to him that endureth to the end. Amen.

## VII.

### ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

AUGUSTINE.

[AURELIUS AUGUSTINE, the chief of the Latin Fathers, was born in Numidia, a province of North Africa, A. D. 354. His youth was stained by dissipation, and his mind was clouded by the vagaries of heathen philosophy. Thanks to the prayers of his devout mother, and the teaching of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, he became a Christian at the age of thirty-two. Five years later he was ordained a priest, and in 396 was consecrated Bishop of Hippo. Till his death, in 430, he faithfully defended evangelic truth. His temperament was ardent, his intellect keen and speculative, his exhortations earnest and thrilling, marked by a child-like tenderness and simplicity. "On the City of God," an elaborate defence of Christianity from the attacks of Paganism, is his masterpiece. Although not greatly learned, Augustine has indelibly stamped his theology on the Church. Our selection, from "Homilies on the New Testament," was preached to the Competentes, or "Seekers for Baptism." These discourses were reported, as delivered, by short-hand writers, and are now published in English in Parker's "Library of the Fathers."]

*"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*  
—Matt. vi. 9-13.

THE order established for your edification requires that ye learn first what to believe, and afterwards what to ask. For so saith the Apostle, "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord, shall be saved." This testimony blessed Paul cited out of the Prophet; for by the Prophet were those times foretold, when all men should call upon God; "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord, shall be saved." And he added, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they

believe in Him of whom they have not heard? Or how shall they hear without a preacher? Or how shall they preach except they be sent?" Therefore were preachers sent. They preached Christ. As they preached, the people heard, by hearing they believed, and by believing called upon Him. Because then it was most rightly and most truly said, "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" therefore have ye first learned what to believe: and to-day have learnt to call on Him in whom ye have believed.

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, hath taught us a Prayer; and though He be the Lord himself, as ye have heard and repeated in the Creed, the Only Son of God, yet He would not be alone. He is the Only Son, and yet would not be alone; He hath vouchsafed to have brethren. For to whom doth He say, "Say, Our Father, which art in heaven?" Whom did He wish us to call our Father, save His own Father? Did He grudge us this? Parents sometimes when they have gotten one, or two, or three children, fear to give birth to any more, lest they reduce the rest to beggary. But because the inheritance which He promised us is such as many may possess, and no one be straitened; therefore hath He called into His brotherhood the peoples of the nations; and the Only Son hath numberless brethren; who say, "Our Father, which art in heaven." So said they who have been before us; and so shall say those who will come after us. See how many brethren the Only Son hath in His grace, sharing His inheritance with those for whom He suffered death. We had a father and mother on earth, that we might be born to labors and to death: but we have found other parents, God our Father, and the Church our Mother, by whom we are born unto life eternal. Let us then consider, beloved, whose children we have begun to be; and let us live so as becomes those who have

such a Father. See, how that our Creator hath condescended to be our Father!

We have heard whom we ought to call upon, and with what hope of an eternal inheritance we have begun to have a Father in heaven; let us now hear what we must ask of Him. Of such a Father what shall we ask? Do we not ask rain of Him, to-day, and yesterday, and the day before? This is no great thing to have asked of such a Father, and yet ye see with what sighings, and with what great desire we ask for rain, when death is feared,—when that is feared which none can escape. For sooner or later every man must die, and we groan, and pray, and travail in pain, and cry to God, that we may die a little later. How much more ought we to cry to Him, that we may come to that place where we shall never die!

Therefore is it said, "Hallowed be Thy Name." This we also ask of Him that His Name may be hallowed in us; for Holy is it always. And how is His Name hallowed in us, except while it makes us holy? For once we were not holy, and we are made holy by His Name; but He is always Holy, and His Name always Holy. It is for ourselves, not for God, that we pray. For we do not wish well to God, to whom no ill can ever happen. But we wish what is good for ourselves, that His Holy Name may be hallowed, that that which is always Holy, may be hallowed in us.

"Thy kingdom come." Come it surely will, whether we ask or no. Indeed, God hath an eternal kingdom. For when did He not reign? When did He begin to reign? For His kingdom hath no beginning, neither shall it have any end. But that ye may know that in this prayer also we pray for ourselves, and not for God (for we do not say, "Thy kingdom come," as though we were asking that God may reign); we shall be ourselves His kingdom, if believing in Him we make progress in this faith. All the faithful, redeemed by the Blood of His Only Son, will be His king-

dom. And this His kingdom will come, when the resurrection of the dead shall have taken place; for then He will come himself. And when the dead are risen, He will divide them, as He himself saith, "and He shall set some on the right hand, and some on the left." To those who shall be on the right hand He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom." This is what we wish and pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come;" that it may come to us. For if we shall be reprobates, that kingdom will come to others, but not to us. But if we shall be of that number, who belong to the members of His Only-begotten Son, His kingdom will come to us, and will not tarry. For are there as many ages yet remaining, as have already passed away? The Apostle John hath said, "My little children, it is the last hour." But it is a long hour proportioned to this long day; and see how many years this last hour lasteth. But nevertheless, be ye as those who watch, and so sleep, and rise again, and reign. Let us watch now, let us sleep in death; at the end we shall rise again, and shall reign without end.

"Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth." The third thing we pray for is, that His will may be done as in heaven so in earth. And in this too we wish well for ourselves. For the will of God must necessarily be done. It is the will of God that the good should reign, and the wicked be damned. Is it possible that this will should not be done? But what good do we wish for ourselves, when we say, "Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth?" Give ear. For this petition may be understood in many ways, and many things are to be in our thoughts in this petition, when we pray God, "Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth." As Thy Angels offend Thee not, so may we also not offend Thee. Again, how is "Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth," understood? All the holy Patriarchs, all the Prophets, all the Apostles, all the spiritual are as it were



God's heaven; and we in comparison of them are earth. "Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth;" as in them, so in us also. Again, "Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth;" the Church of God is heaven, His enemies are earth. So we wish well for our enemies, that they too may believe and become Christians, and so the will of God be done as in heaven, so also in earth. Again, "Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth." Our spirit is heaven, and the flesh earth. As our spirit is renewed by believing, so may our flesh be renewed by rising again; and "the will of God be done as in heaven, so in earth." Again, our mind whereby we see truth, and delight in this truth, is heaven; as, "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." What is the earth? "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind?" When this strife shall have passed away, and a full concord be brought about of the flesh and spirit, the will of God will be done as in heaven, so also in earth. When we repeat this petition, let us think of all these things, and ask them all of the Father. Now all these things which we have mentioned, these three petitions, beloved, have respect to the life eternal. For if the Name of our God is sanctified in us, it will be for eternity. If His kingdom come, where we shall live for ever, it will be for eternity. If His will be done as in heaven, so in earth, in all the ways which I have explained, it will be for eternity.

There remain now the petitions for this life of our pilgrimage; therefore follows, "Give us this day our daily bread." Give us eternal things, give us things temporal. Thou hast promised a kingdom, deny us not the means of subsistence. Thou wilt give everlasting glory with Thyself hereafter, give us in this earth temporal support. Therefore is it *day by day*, and *to-day*, that is, in this present time. For when this life shall have passed away, shall we ask for daily bread then? For then it will not be called, *day by*

*day*, but *to-day*. Now it is called, *day by day*, when one day passes away, and another day succeeds. Will it be called, *day by day*, when there will be one eternal day? This petition for daily bread is doubtless to be understood in two ways, both for the necessary supply of our bodily food, and for the necessities of our spiritual support. There is a necessary supply of bodily food, for the preservation of our daily life, without which we cannot live. This is food and clothing, but the whole is understood in a part. When we ask for bread, we thereby understand all things. There is a spiritual food also which the faithful know, which ye too will know when ye shall receive it at the altar of God. This also is "daily Bread," necessary only for this life. For shall we receive the Eucharist when we shall have come to Christ Himself, and begun to reign with Him for ever? So then the Eucharist is our daily bread; but let us in such wise receive it, that we be not refreshed in our bodies only, but in our souls. For the virtue which is apprehended there, is unity, that gathered together into His body, and made His members, we may be what we receive. Then will it be indeed our daily bread. Again, what I am handling before you now is "daily bread;" and the daily lessons which ye hear in church, are daily bread, and the hymns ye hear and repeat are daily bread. For all these are necessary in our state of pilgrimage. But when we shall have got to heaven, shall we hear the word, we who shall see the Word himself, and hear the Word himself, and eat and drink Him as the angels do now? Do the angels need books, and interpreters, and readers? Surely not. They read in seeing, for the Truth itself they see, and are abundantly satisfied from that fountain, from which we obtain some few drops. Therefore has it been said touching our daily bread, that this petition is necessary for us in this life.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Is

this necessary except in this life? For in the other we shall have no debts. For what are debts, but sins? See, ye are on the point of being baptized, then all your sins will be blotted out, none whatever will remain. Whatever evil ye have ever done, in deed, or word, or desire, or thought, all will be blotted out. And yet if in the life which is after Baptism there were security from sin, we should not learn such a prayer as this, "Forgive us our debts." Only let us by all means do what comes next, "As we forgive our debtors." Do ye then who are about to enter in to receive a plenary and entire remission of your debts, do ye above all things see that ye have nothing in your hearts against any other, so as to come forth from Baptism secure, as it were free and discharged of all debts, and then begin to purpose to avenge yourselves on your enemies, who in time past have done you wrong. Forgive, as ye are forgiven. God can do no one wrong, and yet He forgiveth who oweth nothing. How then ought he to forgive who is himself forgiven, when He forgiveth all who oweth nothing that can be forgiven Him?

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Will this again be necessary in the life to come? "Lead us not into temptation," will not be said except where there can be temptation. We read in the book of holy Job, "Is not the life of man upon earth a temptation?" What then do we pray for? Hear what. The Apostle James saith, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." He spoke of those evil temptations whereby men are deceived, and brought under the yoke of the devil. This is the kind of temptation he spoke of. For there is another sort of temptation which is called a proving; of this kind of temptation it is written, "The Lord your God tempteth (proveth) you to know whether ye love Him." What means "to know?" "To make you know," for He knoweth already. With that kind of temptation whereby

we are deceived and seduced, God tempteth no man. But undoubtedly in His deep and hidden judgment He abandons some. And when He hath abandoned them, the tempter finds his opportunity. For he finds in him no resistance against his power, but forthwith presents himself to him as his possessor, if God abandon him. Therefore that He may not abandon us, do we say, "Lead us not into temptation." "For every one is tempted," says the same Apostle James, "when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." What then has he hereby taught us? To fight against our lusts. For ye are about to put away your sins in holy Baptism; but lusts will still remain, wherewith ye must fight after that ye are regenerate. For a conflict with your own selves still remains. Let no enemy from without be feared: conquer thine own self, and the whole world is conquered. What can any tempter from without, whether the devil or the devil's minister, do against thee? Whosoever sets the hope of gain before thee to seduce thee, let him only find no covetousness in thee; and what can he who would tempt thee by gain effect? Whereas if covetousness be found in thee; thou takest fire at the sight of gain, and art taken by the bait of this corrupt food. But if he find no covetousness in thee, the trap remains spread in vain. Or should the tempter set before thee some woman of surpassing beauty; if chastity be within, iniquity from without is overcome. Therefore that he may not take thee with the bait of a strange woman's beauty, fight with thine own lust within; thou hast no sensible perception of thine enemy, but of thine own concupiscence thou hast. Thou dost not see the devil, but the object that engageth thee thou dost see. Get the mastery then over that of which thou art sensible within. Fight valiantly, for He who hath regenerated thee is thy Judge; He hath arranged the lists, He is

making ready the crown. But because thou wilt without doubt be conquered, if thou have not Him to aid thee, if He abandon thee: therefore dost thou say in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." The Judge's wrath hath given over some to their own lusts; and the Apostle says, "God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts." How did He give them up? Not by forcing, but by forsaking them.

"Deliver us from evil," may belong to the same sentence. Therefore, that thou mayst understand it to be all one sentence, it runs thus, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Therefore he added *but*, to show that all this belongs to one sentence, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." How is this? I will propose them singly. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." By delivering us from evil, He leadeth us not into temptation; by not leading us into temptation, He delivereth us from evil.

And truly it is a great temptation, dearly beloved, it is a great temptation in this life, when that in us is the subject of temptation whereby we attain pardon if, in any of our temptations, we have fallen. It is a frightful temptation when that is taken from us whereby we may be healed from the wounds of other temptations. I know that ye have not yet understood me. Give me your attention, that ye may understand. Suppose, avarice tempts a man, and he is conquered in any single temptation (for sometimes even a good wrestler and fighter may get roughly handled): avarice then has got the better of a man, good wrestler though he be, and he has done some avaricious act. Or there has been a passing lust; it has not brought the man to fornication, nor reached unto adultery—for when this does take place, the man must at all events be kept back from the criminal act. But he "hath seen a woman to lust after her:" he has let his thoughts dwell on her with more pleasure than was right;

he has admitted the attack; excellent combatant though he be, he has been wounded, but he has not consented to it; he has beaten back the motion of his lust, has chastised it with the bitterness of grief, he has beaten it back; and has prevailed. Still in the very fact that he had slipped, has he ground for saying, "Forgive us our debts." And so of all other temptations, it is a hard matter that in them all there should not be occasion for saying, "Forgive us our debts." What then is that frightful temptation which I have mentioned, that grievous, that tremendous temptation, which must be avoided with all our strength, with all our resolution; what is it? When we go about to avenge ourselves. Anger is kindled, and the man burns to be avenged. O frightful temptation! Thou art losing that, whereby thou hadst to attain pardon for other faults. If thou hadst committed any sin as to other senses, and other lusts, hence mightst thou have had thy cure, in that thou mightest say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." But whoso instigateth thee to take vengeance, will lose for thee the power thou hadst to say, "As we also forgive our debtors." When that power is lost, all sins will be retained; nothing at all is remitted.

Our Lord and Master, and Saviour, knowing this dangerous temptation in this life, when He taught us six or seven petitions in this Prayer, took none of them for himself to treat of, and to commend to us with greater earnestness, than this one. Have we not said, "Our Father, which art in heaven;" and the rest which follows? Why after the conclusion of the Prayer, did He not enlarge upon it to us, either as to what He had laid down in the beginning, or concluded with at the end, or placed in the middle? For why said He not, if the Name of God be not hallowed in you, or if ye have no part in the kingdom of God, or if the will of God be not done in you, as in heaven, or if God guard you not, that ye enter not into temptation; why

none of all these? but what saith He? "Verily I say unto you, that if ye forgive men their trespasses;" in reference to that petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Having passed over all the other petitions which He taught us, this He taught us with an especial force. There was no need of insisting so much upon those sins in which if a man offend, he may know the means whereby he may be cured: need of it there was with regard to that sin in which, if thou sin, there is no means whereby the rest can be cured. For this thou oughtst to be ever saying, "Forgive us our debts." What debts? There is no lack of them; for we are but men; I have talked somewhat more than I ought, have said something I ought not, have laughed more than I ought, have eaten more than I ought, have listened with pleasure to what I ought not, have drunk more than I ought, have seen with pleasure what I ought not, have thought with pleasure on what I ought not; "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." This if thou hast lost, thou art lost thyself.

Take heed, my brethren, my sons, sons of God, take heed, I beseech you, in that I am saying to you. Fight to the uttermost of your powers with your own hearts. And if ye shall see your anger making a stand against you, pray to God against it, that God may make thee conqueror of thyself, that God may make thee conqueror, I say, not of thine enemy without, but of thine own soul within. For He will give thee His present help, and will do it. He would rather that we ask this of Him, than rain. For ye see, beloved, how many petitions the Lord Christ hath taught us; and there is scarce found among them one which speaks of daily bread, that all our thoughts may be moulded after the life to come? For what can we fear that He will not give us, who hath promised and said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,

and all these things shall be added unto you; for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things before ye ask Him." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." For many have been tried even with hunger, and have been found gold, and have not been forsaken by God. They would have perished with hunger, if the daily inward bread were to leave their heart. After this let us chiefly hunger. For, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." But He can in mercy look upon our infirmity, and see us, as it is said, "Remember that we are dust." He who from the dust made and quickened man, for that His work of clay's sake, gave His Only Son to death. Who can explain, who can worthily so much as conceive, how much He loveth us?



## VIII.

### CATHOLICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

HODGE.

[CHARLES HODGE, D. D., the eminent editor of the "Biblical Repository and Princeton Review" for over forty years, was born in Philadelphia, December 28th 1797. He studied the classics and theology in the College of New Jersey and Princeton Theological Seminary. Since 1822, he has held leading professorships in the latter institution of the Presbyterian Church. Commentaries on Romans, Ephesians, and Corinthians, are his chief works, besides "Systematic Theology," a masterly summary of Christian doctrine. The termination of his fiftieth year as a professor was commemorated at Princeton in 1872, by the endowment of the chair of divinity in his name, and the presentation to him of a large thank-offering by his brethren in the ministry.]

*"Is he God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles also?"—Romans iii. 29.*

WE are so familiar with the truth contained in these words that we do not appreciate its importance. Accustomed to the varied beauties of the earth, we behold its manifold wonders without emotion; we seldom even raise our eyes to look at the beauteous canopy of heaven, which every night is spread over our heads. The blind, however, when suddenly restored to sight, behold with ecstasy what we regard with indifference. Thus the truth that God is not a national God, not the God of any one tribe or people, but the God and Father of all men, and that the Gospel is designed and adapted to all mankind, however little it may affect us, filled the apostles with astonishment and delight. They were slow in arriving at the knowledge of this truth; they had no clear perception of it until after the day of Pentecost; the effusion of the Spirit which they then received produced a most remarkable change in their views and feelings. Before that event, they were Jews; afterwards, they were Christians; before, they applied all the promises to their own nation; the only Jerusalem of which they had any idea was the city where David dwelt; the only

temple of which they could form a conception was that in which they were accustomed to worship. But when they received the anointing of the Holy Ghost, the scales fell from their eyes; their nation sank and the Church rose on their renovated sight; the Jerusalem that now is, disappeared when they beheld the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven; the temple on Mount Zion was no longer glorious, by reason of the excelling glory of that temple which is the habitation of God by his Spirit; old things passed away, all things became new; what they had mistaken for the building proved to be the scaffolding; the sacrifices, the incense, the pompous ritual of the old economy, which they had so long regarded as the substance and the end, were found to be but shadows. What was the blood of bulls and of goats to men who had looked upon the blood of Him who, with an eternal Spirit, offered himself unto God? What were priests and Levites to the great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God? What was the purifying of the flesh secured by the sprinkling the ashes of a heifer, to the eternal redemption secured by Him who is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec? What was access to the outer court of a temple, in which even the symbol of the Divine presence was concealed by a veil, to access to God himself by the Spirit? What were the tribes of Israel coming up to Jerusalem, to the long procession of nations coming to the new Jerusalem, and kings to the brightness of her rising; the multitudes from Midian and Ephraim; they too from Sheba, bringing their gifts with them; the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth; the sons of strangers and the forces of the Gentiles, hastening to that city whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise?

This change in the views of the apostles seems to have been almost instantaneous. While Christ was upon earth, they were constantly misapprehending his doctrines; even in the night in which he was betrayed, there was a conten-

tion among them who should be the greatest in his kingdom. But as soon as they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost they ceased to speak and act like Jews, and announced a religion for the whole world.

I. In the general proposition, that the Gospel is designed and adapted for all mankind, there are several important truths involved. The most comprehensive is that contained in the text: God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. It is obvious that the Jews generally, and the apostles as Jews, entertained very erroneous views on this until they were enlightened by the Holy Ghost; they mistook even the spirit of the old dispensation. It is true that Jehovah chose their nation for a peculiar people, and that he was their God in a sense in which he was not the God of the heathen. He revealed himself to them as he did not unto the world; he instituted for them a system of religious observances; sent them his prophets to declare his will; exercised over them a special providence, and constituted them, in the strictest sense, a theocracy. There was nothing, however, in the Old Testament which justified the proud and self-righteous spirit which the Jews manifested towards the heathen; they were not authorized to look upon them as reprobates shut out from the hope of salvation, as unworthy of having even the offer of the true religion made to them. The surprise expressed by the apostles that God had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life, that the gate of heaven was wide enough to admit more than the descendants of Abraham, shows how much they had misconceived the spirit of their own religion.

Their great mistake, however, was in supposing that the exclusive spirit, as far as it did in fact belong to the old economy, was meant to be perpetual. They mistook a temporary for a permanent arrangement, and supposed that the glory of the theocracy under the Messiah involved nothing beyond the exaltation and extended dominion of their own

nation. They were blind to the plainest declarations of their own Scriptures, which foretold that God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh; that the Messiah was to be a light to the Gentiles, to make known the salvation of God to the ends of the earth; and that the sons of the stranger were to have in his kingdom a name and a place, better than those of sons and daughters. Even the affecting parables of our Lord, designed to rebuke the narrow spirit of his disciples, failed to make any adequate impression on their minds. Though they were told that the prodigal son was to be restored to his father's house, clothed with the best robe, and rejoiced over with peculiar joy, they understood it not.

It is not to be supposed that the ancient Jews conceived of Jehovah as a local Deity, confined in his essence to any one place, or restricted in his authority to any one people. From the beginning they had been taught that he was the Creator of all things; that he filled heaven and earth; that he was almighty, doing his pleasure among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth; but they believed him to be indifferent to the welfare of other nations; they did not know that he had purposes of mercy for the Gentiles, as well as for themselves. When they called Jehovah their God, they meant not only that he was the God whom they acknowledged, but that he belonged exclusively to them, that they monopolized his favor, and were the sole heirs of his kingdom. What Christ taught them by his Word and Spirit was, that God was as favorably inclined to the Gentiles as to the Jews; that the same Lord was rich toward all who called upon him; that there existed no reason in the Divine mind, why the heathen should not be fellow-heirs and partakers of the grace of the Gospel, why they might not be fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God. This is what is meant, when it is said he is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; he stands in the same general relation to both; he is as favorable to

the one as to the other; as ready to receive one as the other; as willing to receive and save the one as the other. Christ came not as the minister of the circumcision only, but that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people; praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, laud him all ye people. This is the ground, brethren, on which we stand. We are in the Church, not by courtesy of man; not by toleration or sufferance; not as strangers or proselytes, but as fellow-citizens and fellow-heirs. We that were not beloved, are now beloved; we that were not his people, are now the people of God, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and though Israel acknowledge us not. It is this glorious truth, that God is the God of the Gentiles, that expands the Gospel and makes it a religion suited for the whole world. It is no longer the sluggish Jordan flowing through its narrow channel: it is a sea of glory which spreads from pole to pole. The mercy and love of God are commensurate with his ubiquity; whenever he looks down on man and says, My children, they may look up to him and say, Our Father! Praise him, therefore, O ye Gentiles, laud him, O ye people, for Israel's God is our God and our Redeemer.

II. Again, the proposition that the Gospel is designed and adapted for all mankind, supposes the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, that is, that the service which is now required is a spiritual, in opposition to a ritual and ceremonial service; that the government of that kingdom is a spiritual government, and that its blessings are spiritual blessings. The old economy was, from its ritual and ceremonial character, incapable of including all nations. Without the shedding of blood there was no remission, but sacrifices could be offered only at Jerusalem; there was the temple, the priest, and the altar; there was the symbol of the Divine presence; thither the tribes were required to repair three times every year. Innumerable cases were constantly occur-

ring, which rendered attendance at the place where God had recorded his name absolutely necessary. As the Jewish ritual could not be observed out of Jerusalem, it was impossible that the whole world should be subjected to that form of worship. Those who were afar off were without an offering, without a priest, without access to God. The lamentations of David, when absent from the court of God, his earnest longings after liberty of access to the place where God revealed his glory, show how intimately the happiness of the people of God was connected with the services of the sanctuary. Our Lord announced a radical change in the whole economy of religion, and one which disenthralled it from all these trammels, when he said to the woman of Samaria, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh and now is; when ye neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall worship the Father; the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth." It was here taught, not only that the worship of God was no longer to be confined to any one place, but also that it was no longer to be ceremonial but spiritual. It is no longer necessary to go up to Jerusalem, in order to draw near to God, but wherever two or three are met together in his name, there is he in the midst of them. The temple, in which his people now worship, is no longer a temple made with hands, but that spiritual temple made without hands. Its pillars rest on the four corners of the earth, and it surmounts the heavens; the southern African, the northern Greenlander, the innumerable company of angels, and the general Assembly and Church of the first born, are all included in its ample courts. The sacrifice which is now offered is not the blood of bulls and of goats, but the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The incense which now ascends before the throne of God, comes not from brazen censers, but from living hearts.

Again, under the old economy the Church had a visible head, who dwelt at Jerusalem, by whom the annual atonement was made for the sins of the people. He was their intercessor before God; the medium of communication between God and his people; the arbiter and director of the whole congregation. Those, therefore, who were at a distance from the High Priest were necessarily cut off from many of the most important advantages of the theocracy. Under the Gospel all this is changed. The head of the Church, the High Priest of our profession, is no longer a man dwelling in any one city, but Jesus, the Son of God, who by the one offering up of himself hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified; who is everywhere accessible, everywhere present to guide and comfort his people, and who ever lives to make intercession for them. The believer cannot be where Christ is not. At any time and in every place he may approach his throne, he may embrace his knees or wash his feet with tears, and hear him say, Son, or daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Once more, as to this point: the blessings which the Gospel offers being spiritual are adapted to all mankind. The benefits connected with the old economy were in a great measure external and temporal. This idea the apostle expresses by saying its rites could avail only to the purifying of the flesh. Considered in themselves, they could do no more than secure for those who observed them the benefits of the external theocracy. Those who were circumcised became members of the Hebrew commonwealth; those who kept the law, had the promise of fruitful seasons; those who had forfeited their right of access to the sanctuary, had it restored by offering a sacrifice; those who were defiled by any ceremonial uncleanness, might be purified within the temple by the officiating priest. Apart, therefore, from its reference to the Gospel, the blessings secured by that dispensation were exclusively of this external character; for it

was impossible that its rites should take away sin. These benefits were not only of little value, but they were necessarily confined to a limited sphere; they were incapable of being extended to all mankind. How low must have been the expectations of those who considered the Messiah's kingdom as nothing but an enlargement of this system! How complete a revolution must it have produced in all their views and feelings to discover that Christ's kingdom was not of this world; that the blessings which it promised were not worldly prosperity, not a pompous ritual or splendid temple, not dominion over other nations, but the forgiveness of sin, the renewal of the heart, reconciliation with God and eternal life! These are blessings, not only of infinite value, but such as are confined to no one locality. They are not more needed by one set of men than another; they are incapable of being monopolized, for they constitute an inheritance which is rather increased than lessened by the number of the heirs. We say then that the Gospel dispensation is Catholic, or designed for the whole world, because it is a spiritual dispensation; the worship which it requires may be as acceptably offered in one place as another; the head of this new covenant is everywhere present and everywhere accessible, and the blessings which he confers are suited to the necessities of all mankind.

III. Another point of no less importance, is, that the righteousness of Christ, by which these blessings of pardon, regeneration, and eternal life are secured, is such as to lay an ample foundation for the offer of salvation to all men. This is a point with regard to which the minds of the apostles underwent a great change. Under the old dispensation, the High Priest, as the representative of the people, made a confession of their sins, imposing them on the head of the victim, and made reconciliation by sprinkling the blood upon the mercy seat. By that atonement the sins of the people, considered as committed against the external theocracy,



were forgiven, and the blessings of that dispensation were actually secured. It is obvious that this was an atonement limited in design to that people, having no reference to any other nation. It was limited also in its value, having no intrinsic worth, but deriving all its efficacy from the sovereign appointment. It was also limited in its very nature; being attached to a national covenant, it was in its nature available to none who were not included in that covenant; it was a Jewish sacrifice, designed for Jews, belonging to a covenant made with Jews, and securing blessings in which other nations had no concern.

In complete contrast with all this, we know, in the first place, that the work of Christ was not limited in design to any one nation. Christ himself said, he laid down his life for his sheep, and other sheep he had which were not of that fold; in this sense it is said he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world; or, as the same apostle expresses the same truth in another place, Jesus died not for that nation only, but that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

In the second place, there is no limit to be placed to the value of Christ's righteousness; its worth is not to be measured by the duration or intensity of the Saviour's sufferings, but by the dignity of his person. In contrasting the sacrifices of the Old Testament with that of the New, the apostle says the former were inefficacious because mere animals were offered; that of Christ was effectual, once for all, because he offered up himself. It is the nature of the offering that determines its value; and as the dignity of Christ's person is infinite, so is the value of his sacrifice; if it suffices for the salvation of one man, it is sufficient for the salvation of all; it is incapable of increase or diminution. The light of the sun is not measured by the number of those who enjoy its brightness; millions can see by it as well as a

single individual; it is not the less because many are affected by it, nor would it be the greater though only one enjoyed it. So also the righteousness of Christ is in value infinite and inexhaustible, because it is the righteousness of God.

In the third place, the righteousness of Christ is in its nature suited to all men. As the annual propitiation under the old dispensation belonged to the covenant formed with the whole people of Israel, and was in its nature suited to all included within that covenant; so the righteousness of Christ fulfils the conditions of that covenant under which all mankind are placed. He perfectly obeyed the precepts and endured the penalty of that law by which all mankind are bound; hence his righteousness, being what was due from every man, is in its nature suited to each and every man. As the work of Christ, as connected with the covenant of grace, has special reference to all included in that covenant, and effectually secures their salvation; but as in performing the stipulations of that covenant, he fulfilled the conditions of the covenant of works which all mankind had broken, his work is, in its nature, applicable to all who are under the covenant made with Adam.

Inasmuch, then, as the righteousness of Christ is not limited in the design of God to any one nation; as it is of infinite value; and as it is, in its nature, equally applicable to all men, we are authorized to go to Jew and Gentile, to barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, yea, to every creature, with the offer of salvation. If any man refuses the offer, his blood will be upon his own head; he perishes not for want of a righteousness, but because he rejects that which is of infinite value and suited to all his necessities. The gospel, therefore, is not trammelled; we can go with it round the world, and announce to every creature that Christ has died, the just for the unjust; that he has wrought out an everlasting righteousness, which any man may accept and plead before the throne of God.

IV. Again, the catholic character of the gospel is apparent from its offering salvation on conditions suited to all men. It does not require us to ascend into heaven, or to go down to the abyss; its demands are simple, intelligible, and reasonable; it requires nothing peculiar to any sex, age, or class of men; it is not a religion for the rich in distinction from the poor, or for the poor in distinction from the rich; it is not a system of philosophy intelligible only to the learned, nor is it a superstition which none but the ignorant can embrace. It is truth, simple and transcendent; in all that is essential, intelligible to a child, and yet the object of admiration and wonder to angels. It does not suspend our salvation on any particular ecclesiastical connection; it does not require us to decide between conflicting churches which has the true succession; nor does it make grace and salvation to depend on the ministration or will of man; it is not the religion of any one sect or church, and nothing but the wickedness can equal the folly of the attempt to confine the grace of God to the shallow channel of a particular ecclesiastical organization. What the gospel demands "is nigh thee, in thy heart and in thy mouth;" that is, the word of faith which we preach, "that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Here, then, are terms of salvation which are suited equally to all men, the Jew and the Greek, the wise and the unwise, the bond and the free.

V. Again, the rule of life prescribed by the Gospel is adapted to all men, in every age and in every part of the world; it is the great law of love, which commends itself to every man's conscience, and is suited to all the relations of domestic, social, and political life. It is a principle which disturbs nothing that is good, which can amalgamate with nothing that is wrong, which admits of being acted out

under all circumstances, and of accommodating itself to all states of society, and to all forms of government.

How free, how catholic, how pure, how elevated is the spirit of the Gospel, which reveals God as an universal Father; which makes known a religion confined to no locality, burdened with no expensive ritual, conferring on those who embrace it, not worldly distinctions, but the spiritual blessings of pardon and holiness; which reveals a righteousness sufficient for all, and suited for all; which offers that righteousness to all on the simplest of all conditions, that of sincerely accepting it; whose moral precepts and principles of religious duty, and of ecclesiastical organization, admit of being carried out with equal purity and power, in all ages and in all parts of the world!

1. The catholic character of the Gospel, which we have now been considering, affords one of the strongest arguments for its divine origin. No religion can be true which is not suited to God as its author, and to man for whom it is intended. The Gospel is suited to God because it supposes him to be, as he in fact is, not a national God, but the God and Father of all men; and it is suited to men because it meets not the wants of any one class, nor any one class of wants, but all the wants of every class, tribe, or nation. But besides this, this catholicity is the very characteristic which it would be most difficult to account for on the supposition of its human origin. The apostles were Jews, the very name for all that is narrow, national, and exclusive; how could the most enlarged and comprehensive system of religion owe its origin to such men? We know that the apostles retained much of the narrow and exclusive spirit of their countrymen, as long as their Master was upon earth. When he died they were ready to despair, saying, We trusted it had been He who would have redeemed Israel. Even after his resurrection their eyes were still but half opened, for the last question which they put to him was, "Lord, wilt

thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?" Yet, a few days afterward, these same men began to preach that the kingdom of Christ was a spiritual kingdom, not designed specially for Israel, but for all mankind. This fact admits of no other solution than that recorded in the Acts: after the apostles had received the promised effusion of the Spirit, they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, making it apparent that the Gospel is not the product of Jewish minds, but of men divinely instructed and inspired.

This argument may be viewed in another light. The revelations of God, as contained in the Scriptures, admit of being divided into three portions: those written before the advent of Christ; those referring to his personal ministry on earth; and those written after the effusion of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost. In the first portion, all, at first view, is national and exclusive; the prosperity of Jerusalem and the exaltation of the Jews would seem to be the great subject of prophecy and promise; still there is a constant gleaming through of the imprisoned glory; constantly recurring intimations of a spiritual Jerusalem and of a spiritual Israel, in whom the glorious things spoken of Zion were to meet their accomplishment.

The personal instructions of our Saviour were conveyed mostly in parables, designed to correct the misapprehension and to repress the false expectations of his countrymen, but rather intimating than fully disclosing the nature of his kingdom and the design of his mission. The descent of the Holy Spirit shed a flood of light on the whole series of divine revelations, back even to the first promise made to our first parents; it is the clear exhibition of the economy of redemption, made in the books written after the day of Pentecost, that enables us to read the outlines of the gospel in the law and the prophets; the relation of these several portions of the Scriptures to each other, written at intervals during the course of fifteen hundred years, shows that the whole is the work of one omniscient Spirit; and the fact

that the catholic spirit of the gospel, as unfolded in the later books of the New Testament, is in apparent contradiction, though real agreement with the earlier portions of the Word of God, is a decisive proof that the Bible is indeed the word of God and not the word of man.

2. If the gospel, as has been represented, is designed and suited for all men, it is suited to us. We need the salvation which it reveals; we, being destitute of any righteousness of our own, must accept the righteousness which the gospel offers, or perish in our sins. That righteousness being all that any sinner needs, and being freely and sincerely offered to all who hear the Gospel, we are entirely without excuse if we refuse or neglect the invitations of mercy.

3. If the gospel is suited to all men, it should be maintained wherever it is known, and sent wherever it has not yet been preached. This is the inference which the apostle draws from this subject. If there is no difference between the Jew and Greek; if the same Lord is rich towards all who call upon him, then it is the will of God that all should call upon him. But how shall they call on him on whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? The Gospel being suited to all men, and being needed by all, not for their temporal well-being, but for their eternal salvation, woe is us if we do not make it known; it is an inheritance in which we are but joint heirs with all mankind, and we cannot keep the knowledge of this inheritance to ourselves without manifest injustice and cruelty.

Let us, then, endeavor to enter more fully into the catholic spirit of the gospel; let us remember that the unsearchable riches that are in Christ Jesus are an inheritance for all the poor and perishing; and while we thankfully apprehend those riches for ourselves, let us labor that they may be made accessible to all mankind.

## IX.

### CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

CHANNING.

[WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D. D., was the grandson of William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was born at Newport, Rhode Island, April 7th 1780, and died October 2d 1842. At the age of eighteen, he graduated with honor from Harvard College, and in 1803 became pastor of the "Religious Society's Church." High moral worth, consistent advocacy of the temperance and anti-slavery reforms, and the gift of lofty eloquence, gave him the leadership of the Unitarian denomination. This Sermon, taken by permission from his works, is perhaps the one most in harmony with pure evangelical truth, though it lacks a recognition of the atonement made by our Lord for the redemption of mankind. Dr. Channing advocated a license of criticism and investigation which, when freed from his reverential regard for the authority of the Scriptures, has naturally resulted in the extreme "radical" or rationalistic views of a part of that body. Of his collected writings, 120,000 volumes have been sold.]

*"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*—Matthew xvii. 5.

THE character of Christ may be studied for various purposes. It is singularly fitted to call forth the heart, to awaken love, admiration, and moral delight. As an example, it has no rival. As an evidence of his religion, perhaps it yields to no other proof; perhaps no other has so often conquered unbelief. It is chiefly to this last view of it, that I now ask your attention. The character of Christ is a strong confirmation of the truth of his religion. As such, I would now place it before you. I shall not, however, think only of confirming your faith; the very illustrations, which I shall adduce for this purpose, will show the claims of Jesus to our reverence, obedience, imitation, and fervent love.

The more we contemplate Christ's character, as exhibited

in the Gospel, the more we shall be impressed with its genuineness and reality. It was plainly drawn from the life. The narratives of the Evangelists bear the marks of truth, perhaps beyond all other histories. They set before us the most extraordinary being who ever appeared on earth, and yet they are as artless as the stories of childhood. The authors do not think of themselves. They have plainly but one aim, to show us their Master; and they manifest the deep veneration which he inspired, by leaving him to reveal himself, by giving us his actions and sayings without comment, explanation, or eulogy. You see in these narratives no varnishing, no high coloring, no attempts to make his actions striking, or to bring out the beauties of his character. We are never pointed to any circumstance as illustrative of his greatness. The Evangelists write with a calm trust in his character, with a feeling that it needed no aid from their hands, and with a deep veneration, as if comment or praise of their own were not worthy to mingle with the recital of such a life.

It is the effect of our familiarity with the history of Jesus, that we are not struck by it as we ought to be. We read it before we are capable of understanding its excellence. His stupendous works become as familiar to us as the events of ordinary life, and his high offices seem as much matters of course as the common relations which men bear to each other. On this account, it is fit for the ministers of religion to do what the Evangelists did not attempt, to offer comments on Christ's character, to bring out its features, to point men to its higher beauties, to awaken their awe by unfolding its wonderful majesty. Indeed, one of our most important functions, as teachers, is to give freshness and vividness to truths which have become worn, I had almost said tarnished, by long and familiar handling. We have to fight with the power of habit. Through habit men look on this glorious creation with insensibility, and are less moved by



the all-enlightening sun than by a show of fire-works. It is the duty of a moral and religious teacher almost to create a new sense in men, that they may learn in what a world of beauty and magnificence they live. And so in regard to Christ's character; men become used to it, until they imagine that there is something more admirable in a great man of their own day, a statesman or a conqueror, than in Him, the latchet of whose shoes statesmen and conquerors are not worthy to unloose.

In this discourse, I wish to show that the character of Christ, taken as a whole, is one which could not have entered the thoughts of man, could not have been imagined or feigned; that it bears every mark of genuineness and truth; that it ought therefore to be acknowledged as real and of divine original.

It is all-important, my friends, if we would feel the force of this argument, to transport ourselves to the times when Jesus lived. We are very apt to think that he was moving about in such a city as this, or among a people agreeing with ourselves in modes of thinking and habits of life. But the truth is, he lived in a state of society singularly remote from our own. Of all nations, the Jewish was the most strongly marked. The Jew hardly felt himself to belong to the human family. He was accustomed to speak of himself as chosen by God, holy, clean; whilst the Gentiles were sinners, dogs, polluted, unclean. His common dress, the phylactery on his brow or arm, the hem of his garment, his food, the ordinary circumstances of his life, as well as his temple, his sacrifices, his ablutions, all held him up to himself as a peculiar favorite of God, and all separated him from the rest of the world. With other nations he could not eat or marry. They were unworthy of his communion. Still, with all these notions of superiority, he saw himself conquered by those whom he despised. He was obliged to wear the shackles of Rome, to see Roman legions in his ter-

ritory, a Roman guard near his temple, and a Roman tax-gatherer extorting, for the support of an idolatrous government and an idolatrous worship, what he regarded as due only to God. The hatred which burned in the breast of the Jew towards his foreign oppressor perhaps never glowed with equal intenseness in any other conquered state. He had, however, his secret consolation. The time was near, the prophetic age was at hand, when Judea was to break her chains and rise from the dust. Her long-promised king and deliverer was near, and was coming to wear the crown of universal empire. From Jerusalem was to go forth his law, and all nations were to serve the chosen people of God. To this conqueror the Jews indeed ascribed the office of promoting religion; but the religion of Moses, corrupted into an outward service, was to them the perfection of human nature. They clung to its forms with the whole energy of their souls. To the Mosaic institution they ascribed their distinction from all other nations. It lay at the foundation of their hopes of dominion. I believe no strength of prejudice ever equalled the intense attachment of the Jew to his peculiar national religion. You may judge of its power by the fact of its having been transmitted through so many ages, amidst persecution and sufferings which would have subdued any spirit but that of a Jew. You must bring these things to your mind. You must place yourselves in the midst of this singular people.

Among this singular people, burning with impatient expectation, appeared Jesus of Nazareth. His first words were, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." These words we hear with little emotion; but to the Jews, who had been watching for this kingdom for ages, and who were looking for its immediate manifestation, they must have been awakening as an earthquake. Accordingly we find Jesus thronged by multitudes which no building could contain. He repairs to a mountain, as affording him advantages

for addressing the crowd. I see them surrounding him with eager looks, and ready to drink in every word from his lips. And what do I hear? Not one word of Judea, of Rome, of freedom, of conquest, of the glories of God's chosen people, and of the thronging of all nations to the temple on Mount Zion. Almost every word was a death-blow to the hopes and feelings which glowed through the whole people, and were consecrated under the name of religion. He speaks of the long-expected Kingdom of Heaven; but speaks of it as a felicity promised to, and only to be partaken by, the humble and pure in heart. The righteousness of the Pharisees, that which was deemed the perfection of religion, and which the new deliverer was expected to spread far and wide, he pronounces worthless, and declares the Kingdom of Heaven, or of the Messiah, to be shut against all who do not cultivate a new, spiritual, and disinterested virtue. Instead of war and victory, he commands his impatient hearers to love, to forgive, to bless their enemies; and holds forth this spirit of benignity, mercy, peace, as the special badge of the people of the true Messiah. Instead of national interests and glories, he commands them to seek first a spirit of impartial charity and love, unconfined by the bounds of tribe or nation, and proclaims this to be the happiness and honor of the reign for which they hoped. Instead of this world's riches, which they expected to flow from all lands into their own, he commands them to lay up treasures in heaven, and directs them to an incorruptible, immortal life, as the true end of their being. Nor is this all. He does not merely offer himself as a spiritual deliverer, as the founder of a new empire of inward piety and universal charity; he closes with language announcing a more mysterious office. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Here I meet

the annunciation of a character as august as it must have been startling. I hear him foretelling a dominion to be exercised in the future world. He begins to announce, what entered largely into his future teaching, that his power was not bounded to this earth. These words I better understand when I hear him subsequently declaring that, after a painful leath, he was to rise again and ascend to heaven, and there, in a state of pre-eminent power and glory, was to be the advocate and judge of the human race.

Such are some of the views given by Jesus, of his character and reign, in the Sermon on the Mount. Immediately afterwards I hear another lesson from him, bringing out some of these truths still more strongly. A Roman centurion makes application to him for the cure of a servant, whom he particularly valued; and on expressing, in a strong manner, his conviction of the power of Jesus to heal at a distance, Jesus, according to the historian, " marvelled, and said to those that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith in Israel; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom " (that is, the Jews) " shall be cast out." Here all the hopes which the Jews had cherished of an exclusive or peculiar possession of the Messiah's kingdom, were crushed; and the reception of the despised Gentile world to all his blessings, or, in other words, the extension of his pure religion to the ends of the earth, began to be proclaimed.

Here I pause for the present, and I ask you, whether the character of Jesus be not the most extraordinary in history, and wholly inexplicable on human principles. Review the ground over which we have gone. Recollect that he was born and grew up a Jew, in the midst of Jews, a people burning with one passion, and throwing their whole souls into the expectation of a national and earthly deliverer. He

grew up among them in poverty, seclusion, and labors fitted to contract his thoughts, purposes, and hopes; and yet we find him escaping every influence of education and society. We find him as untouched by the feelings which prevailed universally around him, which religion and patriotism concurred to consecrate, which the mother breathed into the ear of the child, and which the teacher of the synagogue strengthened in the adult, as if he had been brought up in another world. We find him conceiving a sublime purpose, such as had never dawned on sage or hero, and see him possessed with a consciousness of sustaining a relation to God and mankind, and of being invested with powers in this world and the world to come, such as had never entered the human mind. Whence now, I ask, came the conception of this character?

Will any say it had its origin in imposture; that it was a fabrication of a deceiver? I answer, the character claimed by Christ excludes this supposition, by its very nature. It was so remote from all the ideas and anticipations of the times, so unfit to awaken sympathy, so unattractive to the heathen, so exasperating to the Jew, that it was the last to enter the mind of an impostor. A deceiver of the dullest vision must have foreseen, that it would expose him to bitter scorn, abhorrence, and persecution, and that he would be left to carry on his work alone, just as Jesus always stood alone, and could find not an individual to enter into his spirit and design. What allurements an unprincipled, self-seeking man could find to such an enterprise, no common ingenuity can discover.

I affirm next, that the sublimity of the character claimed by Christ forbids us to trace it to imposture. That a selfish, designing, depraved mind could have formed the idea and purpose of a work unparalleled in beneficence, in vastness, and in moral grandeur, would certainly be a strange departure from the laws of the human mind. I add, that if an

an impostor could have lighted on the conception of so sublime and wonderful a work as that claimed by Jesus, he could not, I say, he *could* not have thrown into his personation of it the air of truth and reality. The part would have been too high for him. He would have overacted it or fallen short of it perpetually. His true character would have rebelled against his assumed one. We should have seen something strained, forced, artificial, awkward, showing that he was not in his true sphere. To act up to a character so singular and grand, and one for which no precedent could be found, seems to me utterly impossible for a man who had not the true spirit of it, or who was only wearing it as a mask.

Now, how stands the case with Jesus? Bred a Jewish peasant or carpenter, he issues from obscurity, and claims for himself a divine office, a superhuman dignity, such as had not been imagined; and in no instance does he fall below the character. The peasant, and still more the Jew, wholly disappears. We feel that a new being, of a new order of mind, is taking a part in human affairs. There is a native tone of grandeur and authority in his teaching. He speaks as a being related to the whole human race. His mind never shrinks within the ordinary limits of human agency. A narrower sphere than the world never enters his thoughts. He speaks in a natural, spontaneous style, of accomplishing the most arduous and important change in human affairs. This unlabored manner of expressing great thoughts is particularly worthy of attention. You never hear from Jesus that swelling, pompous, ostentatious language, which almost necessarily springs from an attempt to sustain a character above our powers. He talks of his glories as one to whom they were familiar, and of his intimacy and oneness with God, as simply as a child speaks of his connection with his parents. He speaks of saving and judging the world, of drawing all men to himself, and of giving everlasting life, as we speak of the ordinary powers

which we exert. He makes no set harangues about the grandeur of his office and character. His consciousness of it gives a hue to his whole language, breaks out in indirect, undesigned expressions, showing that it was the deepest and most familiar of his convictions. This argument is only to be understood by reading the Gospels with a wakeful mind and heart. It does not lie on their surface, and it is the stronger for lying beneath it. When I read these books with care, when I trace the unaffected majesty which runs through the life of Jesus, and see him never falling below his sublime claims amidst poverty, and scorn, and in his last agony, I have a feeling of the reality of his character which I cannot express. I feel that the Jewish carpenter could no more have conceived and sustained this character under motives of imposture, than an infant's arm could repeat the deeds of Hercules, or his unawakened intellect comprehend and rival the matchless works of genius.

Am I told that the claims of Jesus had their origin not in imposture, but in enthusiasm; that the imagination, kindled by strong feeling, overpowered the judgment so far as to give him the notion of being destined to some strange and unparalleled work? I know that enthusiasm, or a kindled imagination, has great power; and we are never to lose sight of it, in judging of the claims of religious teachers. But I say first, that, except in cases where it amounts to insanity, enthusiasm works, in a greater or less degree, according to a man's previous conceptions and modes of thought. In Judea, where the minds of men were burning with feverish expectation of a Messiah, I can easily conceive of a Jew imagining that in himself this ardent conception, this ideal of glory, was to be realized. I can conceive of his seating himself in fancy on the throne of David, and secretly pondering the means of his appointed triumphs. But that a Jew should fancy himself the Messiah, and at the same time should strip that character of all the attributes which had

fired his youthful imagination and heart—that he should start aside from all the feelings and hopes of his age, and should acquire a consciousness of being destined to a wholly new career, and one as unbounded as it was new, this is exceedingly improbable; and one thing is certain, that an imagination so erratic, so ungoverned, and able to generate the conviction of being destined to a work so immeasurably disproportioned to the power of the individual, must have partaken of insanity. Now, is it conceivable that an individual, mastered by so wild and fervid an imagination, should have sustained the dignity claimed by Christ, should have acted worthily the highest part ever assumed on earth? Would not his enthusiasm have broken out amidst the peculiar excitements of the life of Jesus, and have left a touch of madness on his teaching and conduct? Is it to such a man that we should look for the inculcation of a new and perfect form of virtue, and for the exemplification of humanity in its fairest form?

The charge of an extravagant, self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus. Where can we find the traces of it in his history? Do we detect them in the calm authority of his precepts; in the mild, practical, and beneficent spirit of his religion; in the unlabored simplicity of the language with which he unfolds his high powers, and the sublime truths of religion; or in the good sense, the knowledge of human nature, which he always discovers in his estimate and treatment of the different classes of men with whom he acted? Do we discover this enthusiasm in the singular fact that, whilst he claimed power in the future world, and always turned men's minds to Heaven, he never indulged his own imagination or stimulated that of his disciples by giving vivid pictures, or any minute description of that unseen state? The truth is, that, remarkable as was the character of Jesus, it was distinguished by nothing more than by calmness and self-possession. This trait pervades



his other excellences. How calm was his piety! Point me, if you can, to one vehement, passionate expression of his religious feelings. Does the Lord's Prayer breathe a feverish enthusiasm? The habitual style of Jesus on the subject of religion, if introduced into many churches of his followers at the present day, would be charged with coldness. The calm and the rational character of his piety is particularly seen in the doctrine which he so earnestly inculcates, that disinterested love and self-denying service to our fellow-creatures are the most acceptable worship we can offer to our Creator. His benevolence, too, though singularly earnest and deep, was composed and serene. He never lost the possession of himself in his sympathy with others; was never hurried into the impatient and rash enterprises of an enthusiastic philanthropy; but did good with the tranquillity and constancy which mark the providence of God. The depth of his calmness may best be understood by considering the opposition made to his claims. His labors were everywhere insidiously watched and industriously thwarted by vindictive foes, who had even conspired to compass, through his death, the ruin of his cause. Now, a feverish enthusiasm which fancies itself to be intrusted with a great work of God, is singularly liable to impatient indignation under furious and malignant opposition. Obstacles increase its vehemence; it becomes more eager and hurried in the accomplishment of its purposes, in proportion as they are withstood. Be it therefore remembered that the malignity of Christ's foes, though never surpassed, and for the time triumphant, never robbed him of self-possession, roused no passion, and threw no vehemence or precipitation into his exertions. He did not disguise from himself or his followers the impression made on the multitude by his adversaries. He distinctly foresaw the violent death towards which he was fast approaching. Yet, confiding in God and in the silent progress of his truth, he possessed his soul in peace. Not only was he calm, but his

calmness rises into sublimity when we consider the storms which raged around him, and the vastness of the prospects in which his spirit found repose. I say then that serenity and self-possession were peculiarly the attributes of Jesus. I affirm that the singular and sublime character claimed by Jesus can be traced neither to imposture nor to an ungoverned, insane imagination. It can only be accounted for by its truth, its reality.

I began with observing how our long familiarity with Jesus blunts our minds to his singular excellence. We probably have often read of the character which he claimed, without a thought of its extraordinary nature. But I know nothing so sublime. The plans and labors of statesmen sink into the sports of children when compared with the work which Jesus announced, and to which he devoted himself in life and death with a thorough consciousness of its reality. The idea of changing the moral aspect of the whole earth, of recovering all nations to the pure and inward worship of one God, and to a spirit of divine and fraternal love, was one of which we meet not a trace in philosopher or legislator before him. The human mind had given no promise of this extent of view. The conception of this enterprise, and the calm, unshaken expectation of success in one who had no station and no wealth, who cast from him the sword with abhorrence, and who forbade his disciples to use any weapons but those of love, discover a wonderful trust in the power of God and the power of love; and when to this we add that Jesus looked not only to the triumph of his pure faith in the present world, but to a mighty and beneficent power in Heaven, we witness a vastness of purpose, a grandeur of thought and feeling so original, so superior to the workings of all other minds, that nothing but our familiarity can prevent our contemplation of it with wonder and profound awe. I confess, when I can escape the deadening power of habit, and can receive the full import of such passages as the

following:—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—"I am come to seek and to save that which was lost,"—"He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father in Heaven,"—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me before men, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father with the holy angels,"—"In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you:"—I say, when I can succeed in realizing the import of such passages, I feel myself listening to a being, such as never before and never since spoke in human language. I am awed by the consciousness of greatness which these simple words express; and when I connect this greatness with the proofs of Christ's miracles which I gave you in a former discourse, I am compelled to exclaim with the centurion, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

I have thus, my friends, set before you one view of Jesus Christ, which shows him to have been the most extraordinary being who ever lived. I invite your attention to another, and I am not sure but that it is still more striking. You have seen the consciousness of greatness which Jesus possessed; I now ask you to consider how, with this consciousness, he lived among men. To convey my meaning more distinctly, let me avail myself of an imaginary case. Suppose you had never heard the particulars of Christ's history, but were told in general that, ages ago, an extraordinary man appeared in the world, whose mind was wholly possessed with the idea of having come from God, who regarded himself as clothed with divine power and charged with the sublimest work in the universe, who had the consciousness of sustaining a relation of unexampled authority and beneficence, not to one nation or age, but to all nations and all times, and who anticipated a spiritual kingdom and everlasting power beyond the grave. Suppose you should be told that, on entering the world, he found not one mind

able to comprehend his views, and felt himself immeasurably exalted in thought and purpose above all around him, and suppose you should then be asked what appearance, what mode of life, what tone, what air, what deportment, what intercourse with the multitude seemed to you to suit such a character, and were probably adopted by him; how would you represent him to your minds? Would you not suppose that, with this peculiar character, he adopted some peculiar mode of life, expressive of his superiority to, and separation from all other men? Would you not expect something distinctive in his appearance? Would you not expect him to assume some badge, and to exact some homage? Would you not expect that, with a mind revolving such vast thoughts, and raised above the earth, he would look coldly on the ordinary gratifications of men? that, with a mind spreading itself over the world, and meditating its subjection to his truth, he would take little interest in ordinary individuals? and that possessing, in his own doctrine and character, a standard of sublime virtue, he would attach little importance to the low attainments of the ignorant and superstitious around him? Would you not make him a public character, and expect to see him laboring to establish his ascendancy among public men? Would you not expect to see his natural affections absorbed in his universal philanthropy; and would not private attachments seem to you quite inconsistent with his vast superiority and the immensity of his purposes? Would you not expect him to avail himself of the best accommodations the world could afford? Would you not expect the great Teacher to select the most sacred spots for his teaching, and the Lord of all to erect some conspicuous seat from which should go forth the laws which were to reach the ends of the earth? Would you not, in a word, expect this extraordinary personage to surround himself with extraordinary circumstances, and to maintain a separation from the degraded multitude around him?

Such, I believe, would be the expectation of us all; and what was the case with Jesus? Read his history. He comes with the consciousness of more than human greatness, to accomplish an infinite work, and where do you find him? What is his look? what his manner? How does he converse, how live with men? His appearance, mode of life, and intercourse are directly the reverse of what we should have supposed. He comes in the ordinary dress of the class of society in which he had grown up. He retreats to no solitude, like John, to strike awe, nor seeks any spot which had been consecrated in Jewish history. Would you find him? Go to the house of Peter, the fisherman. Go to the well of Samaria, where he rests after the fatigues of his journey. Would you hear him teach? You may find him, indeed, sometimes in the temple, for that was a place of general resort; but commonly you may find him instructing in the open air, now from a boat on the Galilean lake, now on a mount, and now in the streets of the crowded city. He has no place wherein to lay his head, nor will he have one. A rich ruler comes and falls at his feet. He says, "Go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and then come and follow me." Nor was this all. Something more striking remains to be told. He did not merely live in the streets and in the houses of fishermen. In these places, had he pleased, he might have cleared a space around him, and raised a barrier between himself and others. But in these places and everywhere, he lived with men as a man, a brother, a friend, sometimes a servant; and entered, with a deep, unexampled sympathy, into the feelings, interests, wants, sorrows of individuals, of ordinary men, and even of the most depressed, despised, and forsaken of the race. Here is the most striking view of Jesus. This combination of the spirit of humanity, in its lowliest, tenderest form, with the consciousness of unrivalled and divine glories, is the most wonderful distinction of this wonderful character.

Here we learn the chief reason why he chose poverty, and refused every peculiarity of manner and appearance. He did this because he desired to come near to the multitude of men, to make himself accessible to all, to pour out the fullness of his sympathy upon all, to know and weep over their sorrows and sins, and to manifest his interest in their affections and joys.

I can offer but a few instances of this sympathy of Christ with human nature in all its varieties of character and condition. But how beautiful are they! At the very opening of his ministry we find him present at a marriage, to which he and his disciples had been called. Among the Jews this was an occasion of peculiar exhilaration and festivity; but Jesus did not therefore decline it. He knew what affections, joys, sorrows, and moral influences are bound up in this institution, and he went to the celebration, not as an ascetic, to frown on its bright hopes and warm congratulations, but to sanction it by his presence, and to heighten its enjoyments. How little does this comport with the solitary dignity which we should have pronounced most accordant with his character, and what a spirit of humanity does it breathe! But this event stands almost alone in his history. His chief sympathy was not with them that rejoice, but with the ignorant, sinful, sorrowful; and with these we find him cultivating an habitual intimacy. Though so exalted in thought and purpose, he chose uneducated men to be his chief disciples; and he lived with them, not as a superior, giving occasional and formal instruction, but became their companion, travelled with them on foot, slept in their dwellings, sat at their tables, partook their plain fare, communicated to them his truth in the simplest form; and though they constantly misunderstood him, and never received his full meaning, he was never wearied with teaching them. So familiar was his intercourse, that we find Peter reproving him with an affectionate zeal for announcing his

approaching death, and we find John leaning on his bosom. Of his last discourse to these disciples I need not speak. It stands alone among all writings for the union of tenderness and majesty. His own sorrows are forgotten in his solicitude to speak peace and comfort to his humble followers.

The depth of his human sympathies was beautifully manifested when children were brought to him. His disciples, judging as all men would judge, thought that he who was sent to wear the crown of universal empire, had too great a work before him to give his time and attention to children, and reproved the parents who brought them; but Jesus, rebuking his disciples, called to him the children. Never, I believe, did childhood awaken such deep love as at that moment. He took them in his arms and blessed them, and not only said that "of such was the kingdom of heaven," but added, "He that receiveth a little child in my name, receiveth me;" so entirely did he identify himself with this primitive, innocent, beautiful form of human nature.

There was no class of human beings so low as to be beneath his sympathy. He not merely taught the publican and sinner, but, with all his consciousness of purity, sat down and dined with them, and, when reproved by the malignant Pharisee for such companionship, answered by the touching parables of the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son, and said, "I am come to seek and to save that which was lost."

No personal suffering dried up this fountain of love in his breast. On his way to the cross he heard some women of Jerusalem bewailing him, and at the sound, forgetting his own grief, he turned to them and said, "Women of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." On the cross, whilst his mind was divided between intense suffering and the contemplation of the infinite blessings in which his sufferings were to issue, his eye lighted on his mother and John, and the sensibilities of a son and

a friend mingled with the sublime consciousness of the universal Lord and Saviour. Never before did natural affection find so tender and beautiful an utterance. To his mother he said, directing her to John, "*Behold thy son* ; I leave my beloved disciple to take my place, to perform my filial offices, and to enjoy a share of that affection with which you have followed me through life ;" and to John he said, "*Behold thy mother* ; I bequeath to you the happiness of ministering to my dearest earthly friend." Nor is this all. The spirit of humanity had one higher triumph. Whilst his enemies surrounded him with a malignity unsoftened by his last agonies, and, to give the keenest edge to insult, reminded him scoffingly of the high character and office which he had claimed, his only notice of them was the prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Thus Jesus lived with men ; with the consciousness of unutterable majesty he joined a lowliness, gentleness, humanity, and sympathy, which have no example in human history. I ask you to contemplate this wonderful union. In proportion to the superiority of Jesus to all around him, was the intimacy, the brotherly love, with which he bound himself to them. I maintain that this is a character wholly remote from human conception. To imagine it to be the production of imposture or enthusiasm, shows a strange unsoundness of mind. I contemplate it with a veneration second only to the profound awe with which I look up to God. It bears no mark of human invention. It was real. It belonged to and it manifested the beloved Son of God.

But I have not done. May I ask your attention a few moments more? We have not yet reached the depth of Christ's character. We have not touched the great principle on which his wonderful sympathy was founded, and which endeared to him his office of universal Saviour. Do



you ask what this deep principle was? I answer, it was his conviction of the greatness of the human soul. He saw in man the impress and image of the divinity, and therefore thirsted for his redemption, and took the tenderest interest in him, whatever might be the rank, character, or condition in which he was found. This spiritual view of man pervades and distinguishes the teaching of Christ. Jesus looked on men with an eye which pierced beneath the material frame. The body vanished before him. The trappings of the rich, the rags of the poor, were nothing to him. He looked through them, as though they did not exist, to the soul; and there, amidst clouds of ignorance and plague-spots of sin, he recognised a spiritual and immortal nature, and the germs of power and perfection which might be unfolded for ever. In the most fallen and depraved man, he saw a being who might become an angel of light. Still more, he felt that there was nothing in himself to which men might not ascend. His own lofty consciousness did not sever him from the multitude; for he saw in his own greatness the model of what men might become. So deeply was he thus impressed that, again and again, in speaking of his future glories, he announced that in these his true followers were to share. They were to sit on his throne and partake of his beneficent power.

Here I pause, and indeed I know not what can be added to heighten the wonder, reverence, and love, which are due to Jesus. When I consider him, not only as possessed with the consciousness of an unexampled and unbounded majesty, but as recognising a kindred nature in human beings, and living and dying to raise them to a participation of his divine glories; and when I see him under these views allying himself to men by the tenderest ties, embracing them with a spirit of humanity which no insult, injury, or pain could for a moment repel or overpower, I am filled with wonder as well as reverence and love. I feel that this

character is not of human invention, that it was not assumed through fraud, or struck out by enthusiasm; for it is infinitely above their reach. When I add this character of Jesus to the other evidences of his religion, it gives to what before seemed so strong, a new and a vast accession of strength; I feel as if I could not be deceived. The Gospels must be true; they were drawn from a living original; they were founded on reality. The character of Jesus is not a fiction; he was what he claimed to be, and what his followers attested. Nor is this all. Jesus not only *was*, he is still the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He exists now; he has entered that Heaven to which he always looked forward on earth. There he lives and reigns. With a clear, calm faith I see him in that state of glory; and I confidently expect, at no distant period, to see him face to face. We have indeed no absent friend whom we shall so surely meet. Let us then, my hearers, by imitation of his virtues and obedience to his word, prepare ourselves to join him in those pure mansions, where he is surrounding himself with the good and pure of our race, and will communicate to them for ever his own spirit, power, and joy.

## X.

### THE FIRST PROPHECY.

MELVILLE.

[HENRY MELVILLE, B. D., for many years "the most popular preacher in London," was born in Cornwall, September 14th 1798. He was educated at St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and ministered in Camden Chapel, London, from 1829 to 1843. Queen Victoria appointed him her chaplain-in-ordinary ten years later, and subsequently canon-residentiary of St. Paul's. His constitution was frail, but his abilities were of a high order. His Sermons attest deep thought and skilful elaboration. He had the rare power of developing to its full the spiritual meaning of his text, and of stamping its teachings lastingly upon the hearts and minds of his hearers. He died in London, February 9th 1871.]

*"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."*—Genesis iii. 15.

SUCH is the first prophecy which occurs in Scripture. Adam and Eve had transgressed the simple command of their Maker ; they had hearkened to the suggestions of the tempter, and eaten of the forbidden fruit. Summoned into the presence of God, each of the three parties is successively addressed ; but the serpent, as having originated evil, receives first his sentence.

We have, of course, no power of ascertaining the external change which the curse brought upon the serpent. The terms, however, of the sentence, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life," (Gen. iii. 14), seem to imply that the serpent had not been created a reptile, but. became classed with creeping things, as a consequence of the curse. It is probable that heretofore the serpent had been remarkable for beauty and splendor, and that on this account the tempter chose it as the vehicle of his approaches. Eve, in all likelihood, was attracted towards

the creature by its loveliness: and when she found it endowed, like herself, with the power of speech, she possibly concluded that it had itself eaten of the fruit, and acquired thereby a gift which she thought confined to herself and her husband.

But we may be sure that, although, to mark his hatred of sin, God pronounced a curse on the serpent, it was against the devil, who had actuated the serpent, that the curse was chiefly directed. It may be said that the serpent itself must have been innocent in the matter, and that the curse should have fallen on none but the tempter. But you are to remember that the serpent suffered not alone: every living thing had share in the consequences of disobedience. And although the effect of man's apostasy on the serpent may have been more signal and marked than on other creatures, we have no right to conclude that there was entailed so much greater suffering on this reptile as to distinguish it in misery from the rest of the animal creation.

But undoubtedly it was the devil, more emphatically than the serpent, that God cursed for the seduction of man. The words, indeed, of our text have a primary application to the serpent. It is most strictly true, that, ever since the fall, there has been enmity between man and the serpent. Every man will instinctively recoil at the sight of a serpent. We have a natural and unconquerable aversion from this tribe of living things, which we feel not in respect to others, even fiercer and more noxious. Men, if they find a serpent, will always strive to destroy it, bruising the head in which the poison lies; whilst the serpent will often avenge itself, wounding its assailant, if not mortally, yet so as to make it true that it bruises his heel.

But whilst the words have thus, undoubtedly, a fulfilment in respect of the serpent, we cannot question that their reference is chiefly to the devil. It was the devil, and not the serpent, which had beguiled the woman; and it is only

in a very limited sense that it could be said to the serpent, "Because thou hast done this." We are indeed so unacquainted with transactions in the world of spirits, that we cannot pretend to determine what, or whether any, immediate change passed on the condition of Satan and his associates. If the curse upon the serpent took effect upon the devil, it would seem probable, that, ever since the fall, the power of Satan has been specially limited to this earth and its inhabitants. We may gather from the denunciation, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life," that, in place of being allowed, as he might beforetime have been, to range through the universe, machinating against the peace of many orders of intelligence, he was confined to the arena of humanity, and forced to concentrate his energies on the destruction of a solitary race. It would seem altogether possible, that, after his ejection from heaven, Satan had liberty to traverse the vast area of creation; and that far-off stars and planets were accessible to his wanderings. It is to the full as possible, that, as soon as man apostatized, God confirmed in their allegiance other orders of beings, and shielded them from the assaults of the evil one, by chaining him to the earth on which he had just won a victory. And if, as the result of his having seduced our first parents, Satan were thus sentenced to confinement to this globe, we may readily understand how words, addressed to the serpent, dooming it to trail itself along the ground, had distinct reference to the tempter by whom that serpent had been actuated.

But, whatever be our opinion concerning this part of the curse, there can be no doubt that our text must be explained of the devil, though, as we have shown you, it has a partial fulfilment in respect of the serpent. We must here consider God as speaking to the tempter, and announcing war between Satan and man. We have called the words a prophecy; and, when considered as addressed to the devil, such is

properly their designation. But when we remember that they were spoken in the hearing of Adam and Eve, we must regard them also in the light of a promise. And it is well worth remark, that, before God told the woman of her sorrow and her trouble, and before he told the man of the thorn, and the thistle, and the dust to which he should return, he caused them to hear words which must have inspired them with hope. Vanquished they were; and they might have thought that, with an undisputed supremacy, he who had prevailed to their overthrow would ever after hold them in vassalage. Must it not then have been cheering to them, whilst they stood as criminals before their God, expecting the sentence which disobedience had provoked, to hear that their conqueror should not enjoy unassaulted his conquest, but that there were yet undeveloped arrangements which would insure to humanity final mastery over the oppressor? And though, when God turned and spake to themselves, he gave no word of encouragement, but dwelt only on the toil and the death which they had wrought into their portion, still the prophecy to which they had listened must have sunk into their hearts as a promise; and when, with lingering steps, and the first tears ever wept, they departed from the glorious precincts of Eden, we may believe that one sustained the other by whispering the words, Though "thou shalt bruise his heel, it shall bruise thy head."

There can be no doubt that intimations of redemption were given to our guilty parents, and that they were instructed by God to offer sacrifices which should shadow out the method of atonement. And though it does not of course follow that we are in possession of all the notices mercifully afforded, it seems fair to conclude, as well from the time of delivery as from the nature of the announcement, that our text was designed to convey comfort to the desponding; and that it was received as a message breathing deliverance by those who expected an utter condemnation.

We are not, however, much concerned with the degree in which the prophecy was at first understood. It cannot justly be called an obscure prophecy: for it is quite clear on the fact, that, by some means or another, man should gain advantage over Satan. And though, if considered as referring to Christ, there be a mystery about it, which could only be cleared up by after events, yet, as a general prediction of victory, it must have commended itself, we think, to the understanding and the heart of those of our race by whom it was first heard.

But whether or no the prophecy were intelligible to Adam and Eve, unto ourselves it is a wonderful passage, spreading itself over the whole of time, and giving outlines of the history of this world from the beginning to the final consummation. We caution you at once against an idea which many have entertained, that the prediction before us refers only, or even chiefly, to the Redeemer. We shall indeed find, as we proceed, that Christ, who was specially the seed of the woman, specially bruised the head of the serpent. But the prophecy is to be interpreted in a much larger sense. It is nothing less than a delineation of an unwearied conflict, of which this earth shall be the theatre, and which shall issue, though not without partial disaster to man, in the complete discomfiture of Satan and his associates. And no man who is familiar with other predictions of Scripture, can fail to find, in this brief and solitary verse, the announcement of those very struggles and conquests which occupy the gorgeous poetry of Isaiah, and crowd the mystic canvas of Daniel and St. John.

We wish you, therefore, to dismiss, if you have ever entertained, contracted views of the meaning of our text. It must strike you at the first glance, that though Christ was in a peculiar sense the seed of the woman, the phrase applies to others as well as the Redeemer. We are therefore bound, by all fair laws of interpretation, to consider that the

prophecy must be fulfilled in more than one individual; especially as it declares that the woman, as well as her seed, should entertain the enmity, and thus marks out more than a single party as engaging in the conflict.

Now there are one or two preliminary observations which require all your attention, if you hope to enter into the full meaning of the prediction.

We wish you, first of all, to remark particularly the expression, "I will put enmity." The enmity, you observe, had no natural existence: God declares his intention of putting enmity. As soon as man transgressed, his nature became evil, and therefore he was at peace, and not at war, with the devil. And thus, had there been no interference on the part of the Almighty, Satan and man would have formed alliance against heaven, and, in place of a contest between themselves, have carried on nothing but battle with God. There is not, and cannot be, a native enmity between fallen angels and fallen men. Both are evil, and both became evil through apostasy. But evil, wheresoever it exists, will always league against good; so that fallen angels and fallen men were sure to join in a desperate companionship. Hence the declaration, that enmity should be put, must have been to Satan the first notice of redemption. This lofty spirit must have calculated, that, if he could induce men, as he had induced angels, to join in rebellion, he should have them for allies in his every enterprise against heaven. There was nothing of enmity between himself and the spirits who had joined in the effort to dethrone the Omnipotent. At least whatever the feuds and jarrings which might disturb the rebels, they were linked, as with an iron band, in the one great object of opposing good. So that when he heard that there should be enmity between himself and the woman, he must have felt that some apparatus would be brought to bear upon man; and that, though he had succeeded in depraving human nature, and thus assimilating it



to his own, it should be renewed by some mysterious process, and wrought up to the lost power of resisting its conqueror.

And accordingly it has come to pass, that there is enmity on the earth between man and Satan; but an enmity supernaturally put, and not naturally entertained. Unless God pour his converting grace into the soul, there will be no attempt to oppose Satan, but we shall continue to the end of our days his willing captives and servants. And therefore it is God who puts the enmity. Introducing a new principle into the heart, he causes conflict where there had heretofore been peace, inclining and enabling man to rise against his tyrant. So that, in these first words of the prophecy, you have the clearest intimation that God designed to visit the depraved nature with a renovating energy. And now, whensoever you see an individual delivered from the love, and endowed with a hatred, of sin, resisting those passions which held naturally sway within his breast, and thus grappling with the fallen spirit which claims dominion upon earth, you are surveying the workings of a principle which is wholly from above; and you are to consider that you have before you the fulfilment of the declaration, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman."

We go on to observe that the enmity, being thus a super-human thing, implanted by God and not generated by man, will not subsist universally, but only in particular cases. You will have seen, from our foregoing showings, that a man must be renewed in order to his fighting with Satan; so that God's putting the enmity is God's giving saving grace. The prophecy cannot be interpreted as declaring that the whole human race should be at war with the devil: the undoubted matter-of-fact being that only a portion of the race resumes its loyalty to Jehovah. And we are bound, therefore, before proceeding further with our interpretation, to examine whether this limitation is marked out by the prediction—whether, that is, we might infer, from the terms of

the prophecy, that the placed enmity would be partial, not universal.

Now we think that the expression, "Thy seed and her seed," shows at once that the enmity would be felt by only a part of mankind. The enmity is to subsist, not merely between Satan and the woman, but between his seed and her seed. But the seed of Satan can only be interpreted of wicked men. Thus Christ said to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John viii. 44.) Thus also, in expounding the parable of the tares and the wheat, he said, "The tares are the children of the wicked one." (Matt. xiii. 38.) There is probably, the same reference in the expression, "O generation of vipers." And, in like manner, you find St. John declaring, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) Thus, then, by the seed of Satan we understand wicked men, those who resist God's Spirit, and obstinately adhere to the service of the devil. And if we must interpret the seed of Satan of a portion of mankind, it is evident that the prophecy marks not out the enmity as general, but indicates just that limitation which has been supposed in our preceding remarks.

But then the question occurs, How are we to interpret the woman and her seed? Such expression seems to denote the whole human race. What right have we to limit it to a part of that race? We reply, that it certainly does not denote the whole human race: for if you interpret it literally of Eve and her descendants, Adam, at least, is left out, who was neither the woman nor her seed. But without insisting on the objection under this form, fatal as it is to the proposed interpretation, we should not be warranted, though we have no distinct account of the faith and repentance of Adam, in so explaining a passage as to exclude our common forefather from final salvation. You must see, that, if we take literally the woman and her seed, no enmity was put

between Adam and Satan; for Adam was neither the woman nor the seed of the woman. And if Adam continued in friendship with Satan, it must be certain that he perished in his sins: a conclusion to which we dare not advance without scriptural testimony the most clear and explicit.

We cannot, then, understand the woman and her seed as Eve and her natural descendants. We must rather believe, that as the seed of the serpent is to be interpreted spiritually and symbolically, so also is the seed of the woman. And when you remember that Eve was a signal type of the church, there is an end of the difficulties by which we seem met. You know, from the statement of St. Paul to the Romans, that Adam was the figure of Christ. (Rom. v. 14.) Now it was his standing to Eve in the very same relationship in which Christ stands to the church, which specially made Adam the figure of Christ. The side of Adam had been opened, when a deep sleep fell on him, in order that Eve might be formed, an extract from himself. And thus, as Hooker saith, "God frameth the church out of the very flesh, the very wounded and bleeding side of the Son of Man. His body crucified, and his blood shed for the life of the world, are the true elements of that heavenly being which maketh us such as himself is, of whom we come. For which cause the words of Adam may be fitly the words of Christ concerning his church, 'Flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones.'" We cannot go at length into the particulars of the typical resemblance between Eve and the church. It is sufficient to observe, that since Adam, the husband of Eve, was the figure of Christ, and since Christ is the husband of the church, it seems naturally to follow that Eve was the figure or type of the church. And when we have established this typical character of Eve, it is easy to understand who are meant by the woman and her seed. The true church of God in every age—whether you consider it as represented by its head, which is Christ; whether you survey it collect-

ively as a body, or resolve it into its separate members—this true church of God must be regarded as denoted by the woman and her seed. And though you may think—for we wish, as we proceed, to anticipate objections—that, if Eve be the church, it is strange that her seed should be also the church, yet it is the common usage of Scripture to represent the church as the mother, and every new convert as a child. Thus, in addressing the Jewish church, and describing her glory and her greatness in the latter days, Isaiah saith, “Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.” And again—contrasting the Jewish and Gentile churches—“More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.” So that although the church can be nothing more than the aggregate of individual believers, the inspired writers commonly describe the church as a parent, and believers as the offspring; and in understanding, therefore, the church and its members by the woman and her seed, we cannot be advocating a forced interpretation.

And now we have made a long advance towards the thorough elucidation of the prophecy. We have shown you, that, inasmuch as the enmity is supernaturally put, it can only exist in a portion of mankind. We then endeavored to ascertain this portion: and we found that the true church of God, in every age, comprehends all those who war with Satan and his seed. So that the representation of the prediction—a representation whose justice we have yet to examine—is simply that of a perpetual conflict, on this earth, between wicked angels and wicked men on the one side, and the church of God, or the company of true believers, on the other; such conflict, though occasioning partial injury to the church, always issuing in the discomfiture of the wicked.

We now set ourselves to demonstrate the accuracy of this representation. We have already said that there are three

points of view in which the church may be regarded. We may consider it, as represented by its head, which is Christ; secondly, collectively as a body; thirdly, as resolved into its separate members. We shall endeavor to show you briefly, in each of these cases, the fidelity of the description, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Now the enmity was never put in such overpowering measure, as when the man Christ Jesus was its residence. It was in Christ Jesus in one sense naturally, and in another supernaturally. He was born pure, and with a native hatred of sin; but then he had been miraculously generated, in order that his nature might be thus hostile to evil. And never did there move the being on this earth who hated sin with as perfect a hatred, or who was as odious in return to all the emissaries of darkness. It was just the holiness of the Mediator which stirred up against him all the passions of a profligate world, and provoked that fury of assault which rushed in from the hosts of reprobate spirits. There was thrown a perpetual reproach on a proud and sensual generation, by the spotlessness of that righteous individual, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Pet. ii. 22.) And if he had not been so far separated, by the purities of life and conversation, from all others of his nature; or if vice had received a somewhat less tremendous rebuke from the blamelessness of his every action; we may be sure that his might and benevolence would have gathered the nation to his discipleship, and that the multitude would never have been worked up to demand his crucifixion.

The great secret of the opposition to Christ lay in the fact, that he was not such an one as ourselves. We are accustomed to think that the lowliness of his condition, and the want of external majesty and pomp, moved the Jews to reject their Messiah: yet it is by no means clear that these were, in the main, the producing causes of rejection. If

Christ came not with the purple and circumstance of human sovereignty, he displayed the possession of a supernatural power, which, even on the most carnal calculation, was more valuable, because more effective, than the staunchest apparatus of earthly supremacy. The peasant, who could work the miracles which Christ worked, would be admitted, on all hands, to have mightier engines at his disposal than the prince who is clothed with the ermine and followed by the warriors. And if the Jews looked for a Messiah who would lead them to mastery over enemies, then, we contend, there was everything in Christ to induce them to give him their allegiance. The power which could vanquish death by a word might cause hosts to fall, as fell the hosts of Sennacherib; and where then was the foe who could have resisted the leader?

We cannot, therefore, think that it was merely the absence of human pageantry which moved the great ones of Judea to throw scorn upon Jesus. It is true, they were expecting an earthly deliverer. But Christ displayed precisely those powers which, wielded by Moses, had prevailed to deliver their nation from Egypt; and assuredly then, if that strength dwelt in Jesus which had discomfited Pharaoh, and broken the thralldom of centuries, it could not have been the proved incapacity of effecting temporal deliverance which induced pharisees and scribes to reject their Messiah. They could have tolerated the meanness of his parentage; for that was more than compensated by the majesty of his power. They could have endured the lowliness of his appearance; for they could set against it his evident communion with divinity.

But the righteous fervor with which Christ denounced every abomination in the land; the untainted purity by which he shamed the "whited sepulchres" who deceived the people by the appearance of sanctity; the rich loveliness of a character in which zeal for God's glory was unceasingly

uppermost; the beautiful lustre which encompassed a being who could hate only one thing, but that one thing sin; these were the producing causes of bitter hostility; and they who would have hailed the wonder-worker with the shout and the plaudit, had he allowed some license to the evil passions of our nature, gave him nothing but the sneer and the execration, when he waged open war with lust and hypocrisy.

And thus it was that enmity, the fiercest and most inveterate, was put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The serpent himself came to the assistance of his seed; evil angels conspired with evil men; and the whole energies of apostasy gathered themselves to the effort of destroying the champion of God and of truth. Yea, and for awhile success seemed to attend the endeavor. There was a bruising of the heel of the seed of the woman. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." (John i. 11.) Charged only with an embassy of mercy; sent by the Father—not to condemn the world, though rebellion had overspread its provinces, and there was done the foulest despite to God, in its every section, and by its every tenant—but that the world through him might have life; he was, nevertheless, scorned as a deceiver, and hunted down as a malefactor. And if it were a bruising of the heel, that he should be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah liii. 3); that a nation should despise him, and friends deny and forsake and betray him; that he should be buffeted with temptation, convulsed by agony, lacerated by stripes, pierced by nails, crowned with thorns; then was the heel of the Redeemer bruised by Satan, for to all this injury the fallen angel instigated and nerved his seed. But though the heel was bruised, this was the whole extent of effected damage. There was no real advantage gained over the Mediator: on the contrary, whilst Satan was in the act of bruising Christ's heel, Christ was in the act of bruising Satan's head. The Saviour, indeed, exposed himself to

every kind of insult and wrong. Whilst enduring "the contradiction of sinners against himself" (Heb. xii. 3), it is not to be denied that a strange result was brought round by the machinations of the evil ones; for suffering, which is the attendant on sinfulness, was made to empty all its pangs into the bosom of innocence. And seeing that his holiness should have exempted his humanity from all kinsmanship with sorrow and anguish, we are free to allow that the heel was bruised, when pain found entrance into this humanity, and grief, heavier than had oppressed any being of our race, weighed down his over-wrought spirit.

But, then, there was not an iota of his sufferings which went not towards liquidating the vast debt which man owed to God, and which, therefore, contributed not to our redemption from bondage. There was not a pang by which the Mediator was torn, and not a grief by which his soul was disquieted, which helped not on the achievement of human deliverance, and which, therefore, dealt not out a blow to the despotism of Satan. So that, from the beginning, the bruising of Christ's heel was the bruising of Satan's head. In prevailing, so far as he did prevail, against Christ, Satan was only effecting his own discomfiture and downfall. He touched the heel, he could not touch the head of the Mediator. If he could have seduced him into the commission of evil; if he could have profaned, by a solitary thought, the sanctuary of his soul; then it would have been the head which he had bruised; and, rising triumphant over man's surety, he would have shouted, "Victory!" and this creation have become for ever his own. But whilst he could only cause pain, and not pollution; whilst he could dislocate by agony, but not defile by impurity; he reached indeed the heel, but came not near the head; and, making the Saviour's lifetime one dark series of afflictions, weakened, at every step, his own hold upon humanity.

And when, at last, he so bruised the heel as to nail Christ



to the cross, amid the loathings and revilings of the multitude, then it was that his own head was bruised, even to the being crushed. "Through death," we are told, "Christ Jesus destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. ii. 14.) He fell indeed; and evil angels, and evil men, might have thought him for ever defeated. But in grasping this mighty prey, death paralyzed itself; in breaking down the temple, Satan demolished his own throne: It was, as ye all know, by dying, that Christ finished the achievement which, from all eternity, he had covenanted to undertake. By dying, he reinstated fallen man in the position from which he had been hurled. Death came against the Mediator; but, in submitting to it, Christ, if we may use such image, seized on the destroyer, and, waving the skeleton-form as a sceptre over this creation, broke the spell of a thousand generations, dashing away the chains, and opening the graves, of an oppressed and rifled population. And when he had died, and descended into the grave, and returned without seeing corruption, then was it made possible that every child of Adam might be emancipated from the dominion of evil; and, in place of the woe and the shame which transgression had won as the heritage of man, there was the beautiful brightness of a purchased immortality wooing the acceptance of the sons and daughters of our race. The strong man armed had kept his goods in peace; and Satan, having seduced men to be his companions in rebellion, might have felt secure of having them as his companions in torment. But the stronger than he drew nigh, and, measuring weapons with him in the garden, and on the cross, received wounds which were but trophies of victory, and dealt wounds which annihilated power. And when, bruised indeed, yet only marked with honorable scars which told out his triumph to the loftiest orders of intelligent being, the Redeemer of mankind soared on high, and sent proclamation through the universe, that death was abolished, and the ruined redeemed, and the gates of heaven thrown open

to the rebel and the outcast, was there not an accomplishment, the most literal and the most energetic, of that prediction which declared to Satan concerning the seed of the woman, "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel?"

Such is the first and great fulfilment of the prophecy. The church, represented by its head who was specially the seed of the woman, overthrew the devil in one decisive and desperate struggle, and, though not itself unwounded, received no blow which rebounded not to the crushing its opponent.

We proceed, secondly, to consider the church collectively as a body. We need scarcely observe that, from the first, the righteous amongst men have been objects of the combined assault of their evil fellows and evil angels. The enmity has been put, and strikingly developed. On the one hand, it has been the endeavor of the church to vindicate God's honor, and arrest the workings of wickedness: on the other, it has been the effort of the serpent and his seed to sweep from the earth these upholders of piety. And though the promise has all along been verified, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, it cannot be denied that a great measure of success has attended the strivings of the adversary. If you only call to mind what fierce persecution has rushed against the righteous; how by one engine or another there has been, oftentimes, almost a thorough extinction of the very name of Christianity; and how, when outwardly there has been peace, tares, sown by the enemy, have sent up a harvest of perilous heresies; you cannot withhold your acknowledgment that Satan has bruised the heel of the church. But he has done nothing more. If he have hewn down thousands by the sword, and consumed thousands at the stake, thousands have sprung forward to fill up the breach; and if he have succeeded in pouring forth a flood of pestilential doctrine, there have arisen staunch advocates of truth who have stemmed the torrent, and snatched the articles of faith, uninjured, from the deluge. There has never been the time when God has been left without a witness

upon earth. And though the church has often been sickly and weak; though the best blood has been drained from her veins, and a languor, like that of moral palsy, has settled on her limbs; still life hath never been wholly extinguished; but, after awhile, the sinking energies have been marvelously recruited, and the worn and wasted body has risen up more athletic than before, and displayed to the nations all the vigor of renovated youth.

So that only the heel has been bruised. And since, up to the second advent of the Lord, the church shall be battered with heresy, and persecution, and infidelity, we look not, under the present dispensation, for discontinuance of this bruising of the heel. Yet, while Satan is bruising the church's heel, the church, by God's help, is bruising Satan's head. The church may be compelled to prophesy in sackcloth. Affliction may be her portion, as it was that of her glorified head. But the church is, throughout, God's witness upon earth. The church is God's instrument for carrying on those purposes which shall terminate in the final setting up of the Mediator's kingdom. And, oh, there is not won over a single soul to Christ, and the Gospel message makes not its way to a single heart, without an attendant effect as of a stamping on the head of the tempter: for a captive is delivered from the oppressor, and to deliver the slave is to defeat the tyrant. Thus the seed of the woman is continually bruising the head of the serpent. And whensoever the church, as an engine in God's hands, makes a successful stand for piety and truth; whensoever, sending out her missionaries to the broad waste of heathenism, she demolishes an altar of superstition, and teaches the pagan to cast his idols to the mole and the bat; or whensoever, assailing mere nominal Christianity, she fastens men to practice as the alone test of profession; then does she strike a blow which is felt at the very centre of the kingdom of darkness, and then is she experiencing a partial fulfilment of the promise, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xvi. 20.)

And when the fierce and on-going conflict shall be brought to a close; when this burdened creation shall have shaken off the slaves and the objects of concupiscence, and the church of the living God shall reign, with its head, over the tribes and provinces of an evangelized earth; then in the completeness of the triumph of righteousness shall be the completeness of the serpent's discomfiture. And as the angel and the archangel contrast the slight injury which Satan could ever cause to the church, with that overwhelming ruin which the church has, at last, hurled down upon Satan; as they compare the brief struggle and the everlasting glory of the one, with the shadowy success and the never-ending torments of the other; will they not decide, and tell out their decision in language of rapture and admiration, that, if ever prediction were fulfilled to the very letter, it is that which, addressed to the serpent, and describing the church as the seed of the woman, declared, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel?"

Such is the second fulfilment of the prophecy of our text. The church, considered collectively as a body, is so assaulted by the serpent and his seed that its heel is bruised: but even now it offers such resistance to evil, and hereafter it shall triumph so signally over every opponent, that the prediction, "it shall bruise thy head," must be received as destined to a literal accomplishment.

We have yet to notice the third fulfilment. We may resolve the church into its separate members, and, taking each individual believer as the seed of the woman, show you how our text is realized in his experience.

Now if there be enmity between the serpent and the church generally, of course there is also between the serpent and each member of that church. We have already given it as the description of a converted man, that he has been supernaturally excited to a war with the devil. Whilst left in the darkness and alienation of nature, he submits willingly to the dominion of evil: evil is his element, and he neither

strives nor wishes for emancipation. But when the grace of God is introduced into his heart, he will discern quickly the danger and hatefulness of sin, and will yield himself, in a higher strength than his own, to the work of resisting the serpent. Thus enmity is put between the believer and the serpent and his seed. Let a man give himself to the concerns of eternity; let him, in good earnest, set about the business of the soul's salvation; and he will, assuredly, draw upon himself the dislike and opposition of a whole circle of worldly acquaintance, so that his over-preciseness and austerity will become subject of ridicule in his village or neighborhood. We quite mistake the nature both of Christianity and of man, if we suppose that opposition to religion can be limited to an age or a country. Persecution, in its most terrible forms, is only the development of a principle which must unavoidably exist until either Christianity or human nature be altered. There is a necessary repugnance between Christianity and human nature. The two cannot be amalgamated: one must be changed before it will combine with the other. And we fear that this is, in a degree, an overlooked truth, and that men are disposed to assign persecution to local or temporary causes. But we wish you to be clear on the fact, that "the offence of the cross" (Gal. v. 11) has not ceased, and cannot cease. We readily allow that the form, under which the hatred manifests itself, will be sensibly affected by the civilization and intelligence of the age. In days of an imperfect refinement and a scanty literature, you will find this hatred unsheathing the sword, and lighting the pile: but when human society is at a high point of polish and knowledge, and the principles of religious toleration are well understood, there is, perhaps, comparatively small likelihood that savage violence will be the engine employed against godliness. Yet there are a hundred batteries which may and will be opened upon the righteous. The follower of Christ must calculate on many sneers, and much reviling. He must look to meet often with coldness and contempt,

harder of endurance than many forms of martyrdom; for the courage which could march to the stake may be daunted by a laugh. And, frequently, the opposition assumes a more decided shape. The parent will act harshly towards the child; the superior withdraw his countenance from the dependent; and all because of a giving heed to the directions of Scripture. Religion, as though it were rebellion, alienates the affections, and alters the wills, of fathers and guardians. So that we tell an individual that he blinds himself to plain matters of fact, if he espouse the opinion that the apostle's words applied only to the first ages of Christianity, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) To "live godly in Christ Jesus" is to have enmity put between yourselves and the seed of the serpent; and you may be assured, that, unless this enmity be merely nominal on your side, it will manifest itself by acts on the other.

Thus the prophecy of our text announces, what has been verified by the history of all ages, that no man can serve God without uniting against himself evil men and evil angels. Evil angels will assault him, alarmed that their prey is escaping from their grasp. Evil men, rebuked by his example, will become agents of the serpent, and strive to wrench him from his righteousness.

But what, after all, is the amount of injury which the serpent and his seed can cause to God's children? Is it not a truth, which can only then be denied when you have cashiered the authority of every page of the Bible, that he who believes upon Christ, and who, therefore, has been adopted through faith into God's family, is certain to be made more than conqueror, and to trample under foot every enemy of salvation? The conflict between a believer and his foes may be long and painful. The Christian may be often forced to exclaim with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24.) Engaged with the triple band of the world, the flesh, and the devil, he will experience

many partial defeats, and, surprised off his guard, or wearied out with watchings, will yield to temptation, and so fall into sin. But it is certain, certain as that God is omnipotent and faithful, that the once justified man shall be enabled to persevere to the end; to persevere, not in an idle dependence on privileges, but in a struggle which, if for an instant interrupted, is sure to be vehemently renewed. And, therefore, the bruising of the heel is the sum total of the mischief. Thus much, undoubtedly, the serpent can effect. He can harass with temptation, and occasionally prevail. But he cannot undo the radical work of conversion. He cannot eject the principle of grace; and he cannot, therefore, bring back the man into the condition of his slave or his subject. Thus he cannot wound the head of the new man. He may diminish his comforts. He may impede his growth in holiness. He may inject doubts and suspicions, and thus keep him disquieted, when, if he would live up to his privileges, he might rejoice and be peaceful. But all this, and we show you here the full sweep of the serpent's power, still leaves the man a believer; and, therefore, all this, though it bruise the heel, touches not the head.

And though the believer, like the unbeliever, must submit to the power of death, and tread the dark valley of that curse which still rests on our nature, is there experienced more than a bruising of the heel in the undergoing this dissolution of humanity? It is an injury—for we go not with those who would idolize, or soften down, death—that the soul must be detached from the body, and sent out, a widowed thing, on the broad journeyings of eternity. It is an injury, that this curious framework of matter, as much redeemed by Christ as the giant-guest which it encases, must be taken down, joint by joint, and rafter by rafter, and, resolved into its original elements, lose every trace of having been human. But what, we again say, is the extent of this injury? The foot of the destroyer shall be set upon the body; and he shall stamp till he have ground it into powder, and dispersed it to the winds. But he cannot annihilate a lonely particle.

He can put no arrest on that germinating process which shall yet cause the valleys and mountains of this globe to stand thick with a harvest of flesh. He cannot hinder my resurrection. And when the soul, over which he hath had no power, rushes into the body which he shall be forced to resign, and the child of God stands forth a man, yet immortal, compound of flesh and spirit, but each pure, each indestructible;—oh, though Satan may have battered at his peace during a long earthly pilgrimage; though he may have marred his happiness by successful temptation; though he may have detained for centuries his body in corruption: will not the inflicted injury appear to have been so trivial and insignificant, that a bruising of the heel, in place of falling short of the matter-of-fact, shall itself seem almost an overwrought description?

And, all the while, though Satan can only bruise the believer's heel, the believer is bruising Satan's head. If the believer be one who fights the serpent, and finally conquers, by that final conquest the serpent's head is bruised. If he be naturally the slave of the serpent; if he rebel against the tyrant, throw off his chains, and vanquish him, fighting inch by inch the ground to freedom and glory; then he bruises the serpent's head. If two beings are antagonists, he who decisively overcomes bruises the head of his opponent. But the believer and the serpent are antagonists. The believer gains completely the mastery over the serpent. And, therefore, the result of the contest is the fulfilment of the prediction that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. Oh, if, as we well know, the repentance of a single sinner send a new and exquisite delight down the ranks of the hosts of heaven, and cause the sweeping of a rich and glorious anthem from the countless harps of the sky, can we doubt that the same event spreads consternation through the legions of fallen spirits, and strikes, like a death-blow, on their haughty and malignant leader? Ay, and we believe that never is Satan so taught his subjugated estate, as when a soul, which he had counted as his



own, escapes "as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers" (Psalm cxxiv. 7), and seeks and finds protection in Jesus. If it be then that Christ sees "of the travail of his soul" (Isaiah liii. 11), it must be then that the serpent tastes all the bitterness of defeat. And when the warfare is over, and the spirit, which he hath longed to destroy, soars away, conveyed by the angels which wait on the heirs of salvation, must it not be then that the consciousness of lost mastery seizes, with crushing force, on the proud foe of our race; and does not that fierce cry of disappointment which seems to follow the ascending soul, causing her to feel herself only "scarcely saved" (1 Pet. iv. 18), testify that, in thus winning a heritage of glory, the believer hath bruised the head of the serpent?

We shall not examine further this third fulfilment of the prophecy of our text. But we think that when you contrast the slight injury which Satan, at the worst, can cause to a believer, with the mighty blow which the deliverance of a believer deals out to Satan; the nothingness, at last, of the harm done to God's people, with that fearful discomfiture which their individual rescue fastens on the devil; you will confess, that, considering the church as resolved into its separate members, just as when you survey it collectively as a body, or as represented by its head, there is a literal accomplishment of this prediction to the serpent concerning the seed of the woman, "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

We have thus, as we trust, shown you that the prophecy of our text extends itself over the whole surface of time, so that, from the fall of Adam, it has been receiving accomplishment, and will continue being fulfilled until "death and hell are cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 14.). It was a wonderful announcement, and, if even but imperfectly understood, must have confounded the serpent, and cheered Adam and Eve. Dust shalt thou eat, foe of humankind, when this long-oppressed creation is delivered from thy despotism. As though to mark to us that there shall be no

suspension of the doom of our destroyer, whilst this earth rejoices in the restitution of all things, Isaiah, in describing millennial harmony, still leaves the serpent under the sentence of our text. "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and *dust shall be the serpent's meat.*" (Isa. lxxv. 25.) There comes a day of deliverance to every other creature, but none to the serpent. Oh, mysterious dealing of our God! that for fallen angels there hath been no atonement, for fallen men a full, perfect, and sufficient. They were far nobler than we, of a loftier intelligence and more splendid endowment; yet ("how unsearchable are his judgments") we are taken and they are left. "For verily he taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold." (Heb. ii. 16, marginal reading.)

And shall we, thus singled out and made objects of marvellous mercy, refuse to be delivered, and take our portion with those who are both fallen and unredeemed? Shall we eat the dust, when we may eat of "the bread which cometh down from heaven?" (John vi. 50.) Covetous man! thy money is the dust; thou art eating the serpent's meat. Sensual man! thy gratifications are of the dust; thou art eating the serpent's meat. Ambitious man! thine honors are of the dust; thou art eating the serpent's meat. O God, put enmity between us and the serpent! Will ye, every one of you, use that short prayer ere ye lie down to rest this night, O God, put enmity between us and the serpent? If ye are not at enmity, his folds are round your limbs. If ye are not at enmity, his sting is at your heart. But if ye will, henceforward, count him a foe, oppose him in God's strength, and attack him with the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 17); then, though ye may have your seasons of disaster and depression, the promise stands sure that ye shall finally overcome; and it shall be proved by each one in this assembly, that, though the serpent may bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, yet, at last, the seed of the woman always bruises the head of the serpent.

## XI.

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH.

WAYLAND.

[FRANCIS WAYLAND, D.D., LL.D., as eminent a philosopher as divine, was born in New York, March 11th 1796. He studied at Union College and Andover Theological Seminary. After a five years' pastorate in the First Baptist Church, Boston, he was appointed in 1827 president of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, and retained that office twenty-eight years. From 1857-9 he was pastor of the First Baptist Church, Providence. He died September 30th 1865. The Sermon entitled "The Moral Dignity of Missions," preached by him in early manhood, wonderfully strengthened the missionary cause at home and abroad. His "Elements of Moral Science," and "Elements of Political Economy," have wisely trained thousands of American students. His Christian liberality was ceaseless; for many years he gave away more than half his income. These words of his to a few students—"Do not, young gentlemen, throw away your souls without trying to save them. Make *one honest effort* for their salvation. Even if you are lost, it will be something to have tried"—led to the conversion of one who became a minister, and the writing of a tract, "One Honest Effort," which has awakened many. His sons have written an appreciative "Memoir." By permission, this discourse is extracted from his "University Sermons."]

*"And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida. And the people when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes and looking up to heaven, he blessed them and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they*

*did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.*"—Luke ix. 10-17.

It was the sagacious opinion of, I think, the late Professor Porson, that he would rather see a single copy of a daily newspaper of ancient Athens, than read all the commentaries upon the Grecian tragedies that have ever been written. The reason for this preference is obvious. A single sheet, similar to our daily newspapers, published in the time of Pericles, would admit us at once to a knowledge of the habits, manners, modes of opinion, political relations, social condition, and moral attainments of the people, such as we never could gain from the study of all the writers that have ever attempted to illustrate the nature of Grecian civilization.

The same remark is true in respect to our knowledge of the character of individuals who have lived in a former age. What would we not, at the present day, give for a few pages of the private diary of Julius Cæsar, or Cicero, or Brutus, or Augustus; or for the minute reminiscences of any one who had spent a few days in the company of either of these distinguished men? What a flood of light would the discovery of such a manuscript throw upon Roman life, but especially upon the private opinions, the motives, the aspirations, the moral estimates, of the men whose names have become household words throughout the world! A few such pages might, perchance, dissipate the authority of many a bulky folio on which we now rely with implicit confidence. Not only would the characters of these heroes of antiquity stand out in bolder relief than they have ever done before, but the individuals themselves would be brought within the range of our personal sympathy; and we should seem to commune with them as we do with an intimate acquaintance.

It is worthy of remark, that we are favored with a larger portion of this kind of information, respecting Jesus of Nazareth, than almost any other distinguished person that has

ever lived. He left no writings himself; hence all that we know of him has been written by others. The narrators, however, were the personal attendants, and not the mere auditors or pupils of their Master. The apostles were members of the family of Jesus; they travelled with him, on foot, throughout the length and breadth of Palestine; they partook with him of his frugal meals, and bore with him the trial of hunger, weariness, and want of shelter; they followed him through the lonely wilderness and the crowded street; they saw his miracles in every variety of form, and listened to his discourses in public as well as to his explanations in private. Hence their whole narrative is instinct with life; a vivid picture of Jewish manners and customs, rendered more definite and characteristic by the moral light which then, for the first time, shone upon it. Hence it is that these few pages are replete with moral lessons that never weary us in the perusal, and which have been the source of unfailing illumination to all succeeding ages.

The verses which I have read, as the text of this discourse, may well be taken as an illustration of all that I have here said. They may, without impropriety, be styled a day of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. By observing the manner in which our blessed Lord spent a single day, we may form some conception of the kind of life which he ordinarily led; and we may, perchance, treasure up some lessons which it were well if we should exemplify in our daily practice.

The place at which these events occurred was near the head of the Sea of Galilee, where it receives the waters of the upper Jordan. This was one of the Saviour's favorite places of resort. Capernaum, Chorasin, and Bethsaida, all in this immediate vicinity, are always spoken of in the Gospels as towns which enjoyed the largest share of his ministerial labors, and were distinguished most frequently with the honor of his personal presence. The scenery of the neighborhood is wild and romantic. To the north and west,

the eye rests on the lofty summits of Lebanon and Hermon. To the south, there opens upon the view the blue expanse of the lake, enclosed by frowning rocks, which here and there jut over far into the waters, and then again retire towards the land, leaving a level beach to invite the labors of the fisherman. The people, removed at a considerable distance from the metropolis of Judea, cultivated those rural habits with which the simple tastes of the Saviour would most readily harmonize. Near this spot was also one of the most frequented fords of the Jordan, on the road from Damascus to Jerusalem; and thus, while residing here, he enjoyed unusual facilities for disseminating throughout this whole region a knowledge of those truths which he came on earth to promulgate.

Some weeks previously to the time in which the events spoken of in the text occurred, our Lord had sent his disciples to announce the approach of the kingdom of heaven, in all the cities and villages which he himself proposed to visit. He conferred on them the power to work miracles, in attestation of their authority, and of the divine character of him by whom they were sent. He imposed upon them strict rules of conduct, and directed them, to make known to every one who would hear them the good news of the coming dispensation. As soon as he sent them forth, he himself went immediately abroad to teach and to preach in their cities. As their Master and Lord, he might reasonably have claimed exemption from the personal toil and the rigid self-denials to which they were by necessity subjected. But he laid claim to no such exemption. He commenced without delay the performance of the very same duties which he had imposed upon them. He felt himself under obligation to set an example of obedience to his own rules. "The Son of man," said he, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "Which," said he, "is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that

serveth? but I am among you as he that serveth." Would it not be well, if, in this respect, we copied more minutely the example of our Lord, and held ourselves responsible for the performance of the very same duties which we so willingly impose upon our brethren? We best prove that we believe an act obligatory, when we commence the performance of it ourselves. Many zealous Christians employ themselves in no other labor than that of urging their brethren to effort. Our Saviour acted otherwise. In this respect, his example is specially to be imitated by his ministers. When they urge upon others a moral duty, they must be the first to perform it. When they inculcate an act of self-denial, they themselves must make the noblest sacrifice. Can we conceive of anything which would so much increase the moral power of the ministry, and rouse to a flame the dormant energy of the churches, as obedience to this teaching of Christ by the preachers of his gospel?

It seems that the Saviour had selected a well-known spot, at the head of the lake, for the place of meeting for his apostles, after this their first missionary tour had been completed. "The apostles gathered themselves unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught." There is something delightful in this filial confidence which these simple-hearted men reposed in their Almighty Redcemer. They told him of their success and their failure, of their wisdom and their folly, of their reliance and their unbelief. We can almost imagine ourselves spectators of this meeting between Christ and them, after this their first separation from each other. The place appointed was most probably some well-known locality on the shore of the lake, under the shadow of its overhanging rocks; where the cool air from the bosom of the water refreshed each returning laborer, as he came back beaten out with the fatigues of travel, under the burning sun of Syria. You can imagine the joy with which each drew near to the Master,

after this temporary absence; and the honest greetings with which every new comer was welcomed by those who had chanced to arrive before him. We can seem to perceive the Saviour of men listening with affectionate earnestness to the recital of their various adventures; and interposing, from time to time, a word either of encouragement or of caution, as the character and circumstances of each narrator required it. The bosom of each was unveiled before the Searcher of hearts, and the consolation which each one needed was bestowed upon him abundantly. The toilsomeness of their journey was no longer remembered, as each one received from the Son of God the smile of his approbation. That was truly a joyful meeting. Of all that company there is not one who has forgotten that day; nor will he forget it ever. With unreserved frankness they told Jesus of all that they had done, and what they had taught; of all their acts, and all their conversations. Would it not be better for us, if we cultivated more assiduously this habit of intimate intercourse with the Saviour? Were we every day to tell Jesus of all that we have done and said; did we spread before him our joys and our sorrows, our faults and our infirmities, our successes and our failures, we should be saved from many an error and many a sin. Setting "the Lord always before us, he would be on our right hand, and we should not be moved." "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The Saviour perceived that the apostles needed much instruction which could not be communicated in a place where both he and they were so well known. They had committed many errors, which he preferred to correct in private. By doing his will, they had learned to repose greater confidence in his wisdom, and were prepared to receive from him more important instruction. But these lessons could not be delivered in the hearing of a promiscuous audience. Nor was this all. He perceived that the apostles were worn out



with their labors, and needed repose. Surrounded as they were by the multitude, which had already begun to collect about them, rest and retirement were equally impossible. "There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure, even so much as to eat." He therefore said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." For this purpose, he "took ship, and crossed over with his disciples alone, and went into a desert place belonging to Bethsaida."

The religion of Christ imposes upon us duties of retirement, as well as duties of publicity. The apostles had been for some time past before the eyes of all men, preaching and working miracles. Their souls needed retirement. "Solitude," said Cecil, "is my great ordinance." They would be greatly improved by private communion both with him and with each other. It was for the purpose of affording them such a season of moral recreation, that our Lord withdrew them from the public gaze into a desert place. Nor was this all. Their labor for some weeks past had been severe. They had travelled on foot under a tropical sun, reasoning with unbelievers, instructing the ignorant, and comforting the cast-down. Called upon, at all hours, both of the day and night, to work cures on those that were oppressed with diseases, their bodies, no less than their spirits, needed rest. Our Lord saw this, and he made provision for it. He withdrew them from labor, that they might find, though it were but for a day, the repose which their exhausted natures demanded. The religion of Christ is ever merciful, and ever consistent in its benevolence. It is thoughtful of the benefactor as well as of the recipient. It requires of us all, labor and self-sacrifice, but to these it affixes a limit. It never commands us to ruin our health and enfeeble our minds by unnatural exhaustion. It teaches us to obey the laws of our physical organization, and to prepare ourselves for the labors of to-morrow by the judiciously conducted labors of to-day.

It was on this principle that our Lord conducted in his intercourse with his disciples. "He knew their frame, and remembered that they were dust."

May we not from this incident derive a lesson of practical instruction? I well know that there are persons who are always sparing themselves, who, while it is difficult to tell what they do, are always complaining of the crushing weight of their labors, and who are rather exhausted with the dread of what they shall do, than with the experience of what they have actually done. It is not of these that we speak. Those who do not labor have no need of rest. It is to the honest, the painstaking, the laborious, that we address the example in the text. We sometimes meet with the industrious, self-denying servant of Christ, in feeble health, and with an exhausted nature, bemoaning his condition, and condemning himself because he can accomplish no more, while so much yet remains to be done. To such a one we may safely present the example of the blessed Saviour. When his apostles had done to the utmost of their strength, although the harvest was great, and the laborers few, he did not urge upon them additional labor, nor tell them that because there was so much to be done they must never cease from doing. No: he tells them to turn aside and rest for a while. It is as though he had said, "Your strength is exhausted; you cannot be qualified for subsequent duty until you be refreshed. Economize, then, your power, that you may accomplish the more." The Saviour addresses the same language to us now. When we are worn down in his service, as in any other, he would have us rest, not for the sake of self-indulgence, but that we may be the better prepared for future effort. We do nothing at variance with his will, when we, with a good conscience, use the liberty which he has thus conceded to us.

Jesus, with his disciples, crossed the water, and entered the desert; that is, the sparsely inhabited country of Beth-

saida. Desert, or wilderness, in the New Testament, does not mean an arid waste, but pasture land, forest, or any district to which one could retire for seclusion. Here, in the cool and tranquil neighborhood of the lake, he began to instruct his disciples, and, without interruption, make known to them the mysteries of the kingdom. It was one of those seasons that the Saviour himself rarely enjoyed. Everything tended to repose: the rustling leaves, the rippling waves, the song of the birds, heard more distinctly in this rural solitude, all served to calm the spirit ruffled by the agitations of the world, and prepare it to listen to the truths which unveil to us eternity. Here our Lord could unbosom himself, without reserve, to his chosen few, and hold with them that communion which he was rarely permitted to enjoy during his ministry on earth.

Soon, however, the whole scene is changed. The multitude, whom he had so recently left, having observed the direction in which he had gone, have discovered the place of his retreat. An immense crowd approaches, and the little company is surrounded by a dense mass of human beings pressing upon them on every side. These are, however, only the pioneers. At last, five thousand men, besides women and children, are beheld thronging around them.

Some of these suitors present most importunate claims. They are in search of cure for diseases which have baffled the skill of the medical profession, and, as a last resort, they have come to the Messiah for aid. Here was a parent bringing a consumptive child. There were children bearing on a couch a paralytic parent. Here was a sister leading a brother blind from his birth, while her supplications were drowned by the shout of a frenzied lunatic who was standing by her side. Every one, believing his own claim to be the most urgent, pressed forward with selfish importunity. Each one, caring for no other than himself, was striving to attain the front rank, while those behind, disappointed, and fearing

to lose this important opportunity, were eager to occupy the places of those more fortunate than themselves. The necessary tumult and disorder of such a scene you can better imagine than I can describe.

This was, doubtless, by no means a welcome interruption. The apostles needed the time for rest; for they were worn out in the public service. They wanted it for instruction; for such opportunities of intercourse with Christ were rare. But what did they do? Did our Lord inform the multitude that this day was set apart for their own refreshment and improvement, and that they could not be interrupted? As he beheld them approaching, did he quietly take to his boat, and leave them to go home disappointed? Did he plead his own convenience, or his need of repose, as any reason for not attending to the pressing necessities of his fellow-men?

No, my brethren, very far from it. The providence of God had brought these multitudes before him, and that same providence forbade him to send them away unblessed. He at once broke up the conference with his disciples, and addressed himself to the work before him. His instructions were of inestimable importance; but I doubt if even they were as important as the example of deep humility, exhaustless kindness, and affecting compassion which he here exhibited. When the Master places work before us which can be done at no other time, our convenience must yield to other men's necessities. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." You can imagine to yourself the Saviour rising from his seat, in the midst of his disciples, and presenting himself to the approaching multitudes. His calm dignity awes into silence this tumultuous gathering of the people. Those who came out to witness the tricks of an empiric, or listen to the ravings of a fanatic, find themselves, unexpectedly, in a presence that repels every emotion but that of profound veneration. The light-hearted and

frivolous are awe-struck by the unearthly majesty that seems to clothe the Messiah as with a garment. And yet it was a majesty that shone forth conspicuous, most of all, by the manifestation of unparalleled goodness. Every eye that met the eye of the Saviour quailed before him; for it looked into a soul that had never sinned; and the spirit of the sinner felt, for the first time, the full power of immaculate virtue.

Thus the Saviour passed among the crowd, and "healed all that had need of healing." The lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the blind received their sight, the paralytic were restored to soundness, and the bloom of health revisited the cheeks of those that but just now were sick unto death.

The work to be done for the bodies of men was accomplished, and there yet remained some hours of the summer's day unconsumed. The power and goodness displayed in this miraculous healing, would naturally predispose the people to listen to the instructions of the Saviour. This was too valuable an opportunity to be lost. Our Lord therefore proceeded to speak to them of the things concerning the kingdom of God. We can seem to perceive the Saviour seeking an eminence from whence he could the more conveniently address this vast assembly. You hear him unfold the laws of God's moral government. He unmasks the hypocrisy of the Pharisees; he rebukes the infidelity of the Sadducees; he exposes the folly of the frivolous, as well as of the selfish worldling; he speaks peaceably to the humble penitent; he encourages the meek, and comforts those that be cast down. The intellect and the conscience of this vast assembly are swayed at his will. The soul of man bows down in reverence in the presence of its Creator. "He stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." As he closes his address, every eye is moistened with compunction for sin. Every

soul cherishes the hope of amendment. Every one is conscious that a new moral light has dawned upon his soul, and that a new moral universe has been unveiled to his spiritual vision. As the closing words of the Saviour fell upon their ears, the whole multitude stood for a while unmoved, as though transfixed to the earth by some mighty spell; until, at last, the murmur is heard from thousands of voices, "Never man spake like this man."

But the shades of evening are gathering around them. The multitude have nothing to eat. To send them away fasting would be inhuman, for divers of them came from far, and many were women and children, who could not perform their journey homeward without previous refreshment. To purchase food in the surrounding towns and villages would be difficult; but even were this possible, whence could the necessary funds be provided? A famishing multitude was thus unexpectedly cast upon the bounty of our Lord. He had not tempted God by leading them into the wilderness. They came to him of themselves, to hear his words and to be healed of their infirmities. He could not "send them away fasting, lest they should faint by the way." In this dilemma, what was to be done? He puts this question to his disciples, and they can suggest no means of relief. The little stock of provisions which they had brought with them was barely sufficient for themselves. They can perceive no means whatever by which the multitude can be fed, and they at once confess it.

The Saviour, however, commands the twelve to give them to eat. They produce their slender store of provisions, amounting to five loaves and two small fishes. He commands the multitude to sit down by companies on the grass. As soon as silence is obtained, he lifts up his eyes to heaven, and supplicates the blessing of God upon their scanty meal. He begins to break the loaves and fishes, and distribute them to his disciples, and his disciples distribute them to the multi-

tude. He continues to break and distribute. Basket after basket is filled and emptied, yet the supply is undiminished. Food is carried in abundance to the famishing thousands. Company after company is supplied with food, but the five loaves and the two fishes remain unexhausted. At last, the baskets are returned full, and it is announced that the wants of the multitude are supplied. The miracle then ceases, and the multiplication of food is at an end.

But even here the provident care of the Saviour is manifested. Although this food has been so easily provided, it is not right that it be lightly suffered to perish. Christ wrought no miracles for the sake of teaching men wastefulness. That food, by what means soever provided, was a creature of God, and it were sin to allow it to decay without accomplishing the purposes for which it was created. "Gather up the fragments," said the Master of the feast, "that nothing be lost." "And they gathered up the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full."

Dissimilar as are our circumstances to those of our Lord, we may learn from this latter incident a lesson of instruction.

In the first place, as I have remarked, the Saviour did not lead the multitude into the wilderness without making provision for their sustenance. This would have been presumption. They followed him without his command, and he found himself with them in this necessity. He had provided for his own wants, but they had not provided for theirs. The providence of God had, however, placed him in his present circumstances, and he might therefore properly look to Providence for deliverance. This event, then, furnishes the rule by which we are to be governed. When we plunge ourselves into difficulty, by a neglect of the means or by a misuse of the faculties which God has bestowed upon us, it is to be expected that he will leave us to our own devices. But when, in the honest discharge of our duties, we find ourselves in circumstances beyond the reach of human aid,

we then may confidently look up to God for deliverance. He will always take care of us while we are in the spot where he has placed us. When he appoints for us trials, he also appoints for us the means of escape. The path of duty, though it may seem arduous, is ever the path of safety. We can more easily maintain ourselves in the most difficult position, God being our helper, than in apparent security relying on our own strength.

The Saviour, in full reliance upon God, with only five loaves and two fishes, commenced the distribution of food amongst this vast multitude. Though his whole store was barely sufficient to supply the wants of his immediate family, he began to share it with the thousands who surrounded him. Small as was his provision at the commencement, it remained unconsumed until the deed of mercy was done, and the wants of the famishing host were supplied. Nor were the disciples losers by this act of charity. After the multitude had eaten and were satisfied, twelve baskets full of fragments remained, a reward for their deed of benevolence.

From this portion of the narrative, we may, I think, learn that if we act in faith, and in the spirit of Christian love, we may frequently be justified in commencing the most important good work, even when in possession of apparently inadequate means. If the work be of God, he will furnish us with helpers as fast as they are needed. In all ages, God has rewarded abundantly simple trust in him, and has bestowed upon it the highest honor. We must, however, remember the conditions upon which alone we may expect his aid, lest we be led into fanaticism. The service which we undertake must be such as God has commanded, and his providence must either designate us for the work, or, at least, open the door by which we shall enter upon it. It must be God's work, and not our own; for the good of others, and not for the gratification of our own passions; and, in the doing of it, we must, first of all, make sacrifice



of ourselves, and not of others. Under such circumstances, there is hardly a good design which we may not undertake with cheerful hopes of success, for God has promised us his assistance. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The calculations of the men of this world are of small account in such a matter. It would have provoked the smile of an infidel to behold the Saviour commencing the work of feeding five thousand men with a handful of provisions. But the supply increased as fast as it was needed, and it ceased not until all that he had prayed for was accomplished.

Perhaps, also, we may learn from this incident another lesson. If I mistake not, it suggests to us that in works of benevolence we are accustomed to rely too much on human, and too little on divine, aid. When we attempt to do good, we commence by forming large associations, and suppose that our success depends upon the number of men whom we can unite in the promotion of our undertaking. Every one is apt thus to forget his own personal duty, and rely upon the labor of others, and it is well if he does not put his organization in the place of God himself. Would it not be better if we made benevolence much more a matter between God and our own souls, each one doing with his own hands, in firm reliance on divine aid, the work which Providence has placed directly before him? Our Lord did not send to the villages round about to organize a general effort to relieve the famishing. In reliance upon God, he set about the work himself, with just such means as God had afforded him. All the miracles of benevolence have, if I mistake not, been wrought in the same manner. The little band of disciples in Jerusalem accomplished more for the conversion of the world than all the Christians of the present day united. And why? Because every individual Christian felt that the conversion of the world was a work for which he himself, and not an abstraction that he called the church, was responsible.

Instead of relying on man for aid, every one looked up directly to God, and went forth to the work. God was thus exalted, the power was confessed to be his own, and, in a few years, the standard of the cross was carried to the remotest extremities of the then known world.

Such has, I think, been the case ever since. Every great moral reformation has proceeded upon principles analogous to these. It was Luther, standing up alone in simple reliance upon God, that smote the Papal hierarchy; and the effects of that blow are now agitating the nations of Europe. Roger Williams, amid persecution and banishment, held forth that doctrine of soul-liberty which, in its onward march, is disenfranchising a world. Howard, alone, undertook the work of showing mercy to the prisoner, and his example is now enlisting the choicest minds in Christendom in this labor of benevolence. Clarkson, unaided, a young man, and without influence, consecrated himself to the work of abolishing the slave trade; and, before he rested from his labors, his country had repented of and forsaken this atrocious sin. Raikes saw the children of Gloucester profaning the Sabbath day; he set on foot a Sabbath school on his own account, and now millions of children are reaping the benefit of his labors, and his example has turned the attention of the whole world to the religious instruction of the young. With such facts before us, we surely should be encouraged to attempt individually the accomplishment of some good design, relying in humility and faith upon Him who is able to grant prosperity to the feeblest effort put forth in earnest reliance on his almightiness.

Such were the occupations that filled up a day in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. There was not an act done for himself; all was done for others. Every hour was employed in the labor which that hour set before him. Private kindness, the relief of distress, public teaching, and ministration to the

wants of the famishing, filled up the entire day. Let his disciples learn to follow his example. Let us, like him, forget ourselves, our own wants, and our own weariness, that we may, as he did, scatter blessings on every side, as we move onward in the pathway of our daily life. If such were the occupations of the Son of God, can we do more wisely than to imitate his example? Every disciple would then be as a city set upon a hill, and men, seeing our good works, would glorify our Father who is in heaven. "Then would our righteousness go forth as brightness, and our salvation as a lamp that burneth."

## XII.

### THE METHOD OF GRACE.

WHITEFIELD.

[In the spiritual deadness of the eighteenth century, a most impassioned pioneer of the gospel consecrated his life to declaring its glad tidings of salvation throughout England and her American colonies. GEORGE WHITEFIELD was born December 16th 1714, the son of a Gloucester innkeeper. He entered Pembroke College, Oxford, as a servitor, and allied himself with the little band of worshippers called "Methodists." In his twenty-second year, he was ordained deacon. Excluded from the churches of Bristol, he undauntedly began preaching in the open air three years later. Whitefield and Wesley separated in 1741, because of doctrinal differences, and the former henceforth ministered as a Calvinistic Methodist. Of his vast labors, he briefly records that "from the time of his ordination, to a period embracing 34 years, he preached upwards of 18,000 sermons, crossed the Atlantic seven times, and travelled thousands of miles both in England and America." He died at Newburyport, Massachusetts, September 30th 1770. Several volumes of his discourses, imperfectly reported, are of little value. This thrilling sermon was preached in the High-Church Yard of Glasgow on Sunday morning, September 13th 1741, and is evidently a verbatim transcript. It, with two others, is printed in the "Revivals of the Eighteenth Century," published by the Free Church of Scotland.]

*"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."*—Jeremiah vi. 14.

As God can send a nation or people no greater blessing than to give them faithful, sincere, and upright ministers, so the greatest curse that God can possibly send upon a people in this world, is to give them over to blind, unregenerate, carnal, lukewarm, and unskilful guides. And yet, in all ages, we find that there have been many wolves in sheep's clothing, many that daubed with untempered mortar, that prophesied smoother things than God did allow. As it

was formerly, so it is now; there are many that corrupt the Word of God and deal deceitfully with it. It was so in a special manner in the prophet Jeremiah's time; and he, faithful to his Lord, faithful to that God who employed him, did not fail from time to time to open his mouth against them, and to bear a noble testimony to the honor of that God in whose name he from time to time spake. If you will read his prophecy, you will find that none spake more against such ministers than Jeremiah, and here especially in the chapter out of which the text is taken, he speaks very severely against them—he charges them with several crimes; particularly, he charges them with covetousness: "For," says he, in the 13th verse, "from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one deal-eth falsely." And then, in the words of the text, in a more special manner, he exemplifies how they had dealt falsely, how they had behaved treacherously to poor souls: says he, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying; Peace, peace, when there is no peace." The prophet, in the name of God, had been denouncing war against the people, he had been telling them that their house should be left desolate, and that the Lord would certainly visit the land with war. "Therefore," says he, in the 11th verse, "I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in; I will, pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together; for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord." The prophet gives a thundering message, that they might be terrified and have some convictions and inclinations to repent; but it seems that the false prophets, the false priests, went about stifling people's

convictions, and when they were hurt or a little terrified, they were for daubing over the wound, telling them that Jeremiah was but an enthusiastic preacher, that there could be no such thing as war among them, and saying to people, Peace, peace, be still, when the prophet told them there was no peace. The words, then, refer primarily unto outward things, but I verily believe have also a further reference to the soul, and are to be referred to those false teachers, who, when people were under conviction of sin, when people were beginning to look towards heaven, were for stifling their convictions and telling them they were good enough before. And, indeed, people generally love to have it so; our hearts are exceedingly deceitful, and desperately wicked; none but the eternal God knows how treacherous they are. How many of us cry, Peace, peace, to our souls, when there is no peace! How many are there who are now settled upon their lees, that now think they are Christians, that now flatter themselves that they have an interest in Jesus Christ; whereas if we come to examine their experiences, we shall find that their peace is but a peace of the devil's making—it is not a peace of God's giving—it is not a peace that passeth human understanding. It is matter, therefore, of great importance, my dear hearers, to know whether we may speak peace to our hearts. We are all desirous of peace; peace is an unspeakable blessing; how can we live without peace? And, therefore, people from time to time must be taught how far they must go, and what must be wrought in them, before they can speak peace to their hearts. This is what I design at present, that I may deliver my soul, that I may be free from the blood of all those to whom I preach—that I may not fail to declare the whole counsel of God. I shall, from the words of the text, endeavor to show you what you must undergo, and what must be wrought in you before you can speak peace to your hearts.

But before I come directly to this, give me leave to pre-

mise a caution or two. And the first is, that I take it for granted you believe religion to be an inward thing; you believe it to be a work in the heart, a work wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. If you do not believe this, you do not believe your Bibles. If you do not believe this, though you have got your Bibles in your hand, you hate the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart; for religion is everywhere represented in Scripture as the work of God in the heart. "The kingdom of God is within us," says our Lord; and, "He is not a Christian who is one outwardly; but he is a Christian who is one inwardly." If any of you place religion in outward things, I shall not perhaps please you this morning; you will understand me no more when I speak of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart than if I were talking in an unknown tongue. I would further premise a caution, that I would by no means confine God to one way of acting. I would by no means say, that all persons, before they come to have a settled peace in their hearts, are obliged to undergo the same degrees of conviction. No; God has various ways of bringing his children home; his sacred Spirit bloweth when, and where, and how it listeth. But, however, I will venture to affirm this: that before ever you can speak peace to your heart, whether by shorter or longer continuance of your convictions, whether in a more pungent or in a more gentle way, you must undergo what I shall hereafter lay down in the following discourse.

First, then, before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail, your actual transgressions against the law of God. According to the covenant of works, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" cursed is that man, be he what he may, be he who he may, that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. We are not only to do some things, but we are to do all things, and we are to continue so to do; so that the least deviation from

the moral law, according to the covenant of works, whether in thought, word, or deed, deserves eternal death at the hand of God. And if one evil thought, if one evil word, if one evil action, deserves eternal damnation, how many hells, my friends, do every one of us deserve, whose whole lives have been one continued rebellion against God! Before ever, therefore, you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be brought to see, brought to believe, what a dreadful thing it is to depart from the living God. And now, my dear friends, examine your hearts, for I hope you came hither with a design to have your souls made better. Give me leave to ask you, in the presence of God, whether you know the time, and if you do not know exactly the time, do you know there was a time, when God wrote bitter things against you, when the arrows of the Almighty were within you? Was ever the remembrance of your sins grievous to you? Was the burden of your sins intolerable to your thoughts? Did you ever see that God's wrath might justly fall upon you, on account of your actual transgressions against God? Were you ever in all your life sorry for your sins? Could you ever say, My sins are gone over my head as a burden too heavy for me to bear? Did you ever experience any such thing as this? Did ever any such thing as this pass between God and your soul? If not, for Jesus Christ's sake, do not call yourselves Christians; you may speak peace to your hearts, but there is no peace. May the Lord awaken you, may the Lord convert you, may the Lord give you peace, if it be his will, before you go home!

But further: you may be convinced of your actual sins, so as to be made to tremble, and yet you may be strangers to Jesus Christ, you may have no true work of grace upon your hearts. Before ever, therefore, you can speak peace to your hearts, conviction must go deeper; you must not only be convinced of your actual transgressions against the law of God, but likewise of the foundation of all your



transgressions. And what is that? I mean original sin, that original corruption each of us brings into the world with us, which renders us liable to God's wrath and damnation. There are many poor souls that think themselves fine reasoners, yet they pretend to say there is no such thing as original sin; they will charge God with injustice in imputing Adam's sin to us; although we have got the mark of the beast and of the devil upon us, yet they tell us we are not born in sin. Let them look abroad into the world and see the disorders in it, and think, if they can, if this is the paradise in which God did put man. No! everything in the world is out of order. I have often thought, when I was abroad, that if there were no other argument to prove original sin, the rising of wolves and tigers against man, nay, the barking of a dog against us, is a proof of original sin. Tigers and lions' durst not rise against us, if it were not for Adam's first sin: for when the creatures rise up against us, it is as much as to say, You have sinned against God, and we take up our Master's quarrel. If we look inwardly, we shall see enough of lusts and man's temper contrary to the temper of God. There is pride, malice, and revenge, in all our hearts; and this temper cannot come from God; it comes from our first parent, Adam, who, after he fell from God, fell out of God into the devil. However, therefore, some people may deny this, yet when conviction comes, all carnal reasonings are battered down immediately, and the poor soul begins to feel and see the fountain from which all the polluted streams do flow. When the sinner is first awakened, he begins to wonder—How came I to be so wicked? The Spirit of God then strikes in, and shows that he has no good thing in him by nature; then he sees that he is altogether gone out of the way, that he is altogether become abominable, and the poor creature is made to lie down at the foot of the throne of God, and to acknowledge that God would be just to damn him, just to cut him off, though

he never had committed one actual sin in his life. Did you ever feel and experience this, any of you—to justify God in your damnation—to own that you are by nature children of wrath, and that God may justly cut you off, though you never actually had offended him in all your life? If you were ever truly convicted, if your hearts were ever truly cut, if self were truly taken out of you, you would be made to see and feel this. And if you have never felt the weight of original sin, do not call yourselves Christians. I am verily persuaded original sin is the greatest burden of a true convert; this ever grieves the regenerate soul, the sanctified soul. The indwelling of sin in the heart is the burden of a converted person; it is the burden of a true Christian. He continually cries out, “O! who will deliver me from this body of death, this indwelling corruption in my heart?” This is that which disturbs a poor soul most. And, therefore, if you never felt this inward corruption, if you never saw that God might justly curse you for it, indeed, my dear friends, you may speak peace to your hearts, but I fear, nay, I know, there is no true peace.

Further: before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must not only be troubled for the sins of your life, the sins of your nature, but likewise for the sins of your best duties and performances. When a poor soul is somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, then the poor creature, being born under the covenant of works, flies directly to a covenant of works again. And as Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden, and sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness, so the poor sinner, when awakened, flies to his duties and to his performances, to hide himself from God, and goes to patch up a righteousness of his own. Says he, I will be mighty good now—I will reform—I will do all I can; and then certainly Jesus Christ will have mercy on me. But before you can speak peace to your heart, you must be brought to see that God may damn you.

for the best prayer you ever put up ; you must be brought to see that all your duties—all your righteousness—as the prophet elegantly expresses it—put them all together, are so far from recommending you to God, are so far from being any motive and inducement to God to have mercy on your poor soul, that he will see them to be filthy rags, a menstruous cloth—that God hates them, and cannot away with them, if you bring them to him in order to recommend you to his favor. My dear friends, what is there in our performances to recommend us unto God ? Our persons are in an unjustified state by nature, we deserve to be damned ten thousand times over ; and what must our performances be ? We can do no good thing by nature : “ They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” You may do things materially good, but you cannot do a thing formally and rightly good ; because nature cannot act above itself. It is impossible that a man who is unconverted can act for the glory of God ; he cannot do anything in faith, and “ whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” After we are renewed, yet we are renewed but in part, indwelling sin continues in us, there is a mixture of corruption in every one of our duties ; so that after we are converted, were Jesus Christ only to accept us according to our works, our works would damn us, for we cannot put up a prayer but it is far from that perfection which the moral law requireth. I do not know what you may think, but I can say that I cannot pray but I sin—I cannot preach to you or any others but I sin—I can do nothing without sin ; and, as one expresseth it, my repentance wants to be repented of, and my tears to be washed in the precious blood of my dear Redeemer. Our best duties are as so many splendid sins. Before you can speak peace to your heart, you must not only be sick of your original and actual sin, but you must be made sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness ; it is the

last idol taken out of our heart. The pride of our heart will not let us submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But if you never felt that you had no righteousness of your own, if you never felt the deficiency of your own righteousness, you cannot come to Jesus Christ. There are a great many now who may say, Well, we believe all this; but there is a great difference betwixt talking and feeling. Did you ever feel the want of a dear Redeemer? Did you ever feel the want of Jesus Christ, upon the account of the deficiency of your own righteousness? And can you now say from your heart, Lord, thou mayst justly damn me for the best duties that ever I did perform? If you are not thus brought out of self, you may speak peace to yourselves, but yet there is no peace.

But then, before you can speak peace to your souls, there is one particular sin you must be greatly troubled for, and yet I fear there are few of you think what it is; it is the reigning, the damning sin of the Christian world, and yet the Christian world seldom or never think of it. And pray what is that? It is what most of you think you are not guilty of—and that is, the sin of unbelief. Before you can speak peace to your heart, you must be troubled for the unbelief of your heart. But, can it be supposed that any of you are unbelievers here in this church-yard, that are born in Scotland, in a reformed country, that go to church every Sabbath? Can any of you that receive the sacrament once a year—O that it were administered oftener!—can it be supposed that you who had tokens for the sacrament, that you who keep up family prayer, that any of you do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? I appeal to your own hearts, if you would not think me uncharitable, if I doubted whether any of you believed in Christ; and yet, I fear upon examination, we should find that most of you have not so much faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the devil himself. I am persuaded the devil believes more of the Bible than

most of us do. He believes the divinity of Jesus Christ; that is more than many who call themselves Christians do; nay, he believes and trembles; and that is more than thousands amongst us do. My friends, we mistake a historical faith for a true faith, wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God. You fancy you believe, because you believe there is such a book as we call the Bible—because you go to church; all this you may do, and have no true faith in Christ. Merely to believe there was such a person as Christ, merely to believe there is a book called the Bible, will do you no good, more than to believe there was such a man as Cæsar or Alexander the Great. The Bible is a sacred depository. What thanks have we to give to God for these lively oracles! But yet we may have these, and not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. My dear friends, there must be a principle wrought in the heart by the Spirit of the living God. Did I ask you how long it is since you believed in Jesus Christ, I suppose most of you would tell me, you believed in Jesus Christ as long as ever you remember—you never did misbelieve. Then, you could not give me a better proof that you never yet believed in Jesus Christ, unless you were sanctified early, as from the womb; for, they that otherwise believe in Christ know there was a time when they did not believe in Jesus Christ. You say you love God with all your heart, soul, and strength. If I were to ask you how long it is since you loved God, you would say, As long as you can remember; you never hated God, you know no time when there was enmity in your heart against God. Then, unless you were sanctified very early, you never loved God in your life. My dear friends, I am more particular in this, because it is a most deceitful delusion, whereby so many people are carried away, that they believe already. Therefore, it is remarked of Mr. Marshall, giving account of his experiences, that he had been working for life, and he had ranged all his sins under the ten commandments, and then coming to a

minister, asked him the reason why he could not get peace. The minister looked to his catalogue, Away, says he, I do not find one word of the sin of unbelief in all your catalogue. It is the peculiar work of the Spirit of God to convince us of our unbelief—that we have got no faith. Says Jesus Christ, “I will send the Comforter; and when he is come, he will reprove the world” of the sin of unbelief; “of sin,” says Christ, “because they believe not on me.” Now, my dear friends, did God ever show you that you had no faith? Were you ever made to bewail a hard heart of unbelief? Was it ever the language of your heart, Lord, give me faith; Lord, enable me to lay hold on thee; Lord, enable me to call thee *my* Lord and *my* God? Did Jesus Christ ever convince you in this manner? Did he ever convince you of your inability to close with Christ, and make you to cry out to God to give you faith? If not, do not speak peace to your heart. May the Lord awaken you, and give you true, solid peace before you go hence and be no more!

Once more, then: before you can speak peace to your heart, you must not only be convinced of your actual and original sin, the sins of your own righteousness, the sin of unbelief, but you must be enabled to lay hold upon the perfect righteousness, the all-sufficient righteousness, of the Lord Jesus Christ; you must lay hold by faith on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and then you shall have peace. “Come,” says Jesus, “unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” This speaks encouragement to all that are weary and heavy laden; but the promise of rest is made to them only upon their coming and believing, and taking him to be their God and their all. Before we can ever have peace with God, we must be justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, we must be enabled to apply Christ to our hearts, we must have Christ brought home to our souls, so as his righteousness may be

made our righteousness, so as his merits may be imputed to our souls. My dear friends, were you ever married to Jesus Christ? Did Jesus Christ ever give himself to you? Did you ever close with Christ by a lively faith, so as to feel Christ in your hearts, so as to hear him speaking peace to your souls? Did peace ever flow in upon your hearts like a river? Did you ever feel that peace that Christ spoke to his disciples? I pray God he may come and speak peace to you. These things you must experience. I am now talking of the invisible realities of another world, of inward religion, of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart. I am now talking of a matter of great importance, my dear hearers; you are all concerned in it, your souls are concerned in it, your eternal salvation is concerned in it. You may be all at peace, but perhaps the devil has lulled you asleep into a carnal lethargy and security, and will endeavor to keep you there, till he get you to hell, and there you will be awakened; but it will be dreadful to be awakened and find yourselves so fearfully mistaken, when the great gulf is fixed, when you will be calling to all eternity for a drop of water to cool your tongue, and shall not obtain it.

Give me leave, then, to address myself to several sorts of persons; and O may God, of his infinite mercy, bless the application! There are some of you perhaps can say, Through grace we can go along with you. Blessed be God, we have been convinced of our actual sins, we have been convinced of original sin, we have been convinced of self-righteousness, we have felt the bitterness of unbelief, and through grace we have closed with Jesus Christ; we can speak peace to our hearts, because God hath spoken peace to us. Can you say so? Then I will salute you, as the angels did the women the first day of the week, All hail! fear not ye, my dear brethren, you are happy souls; you may lie down and be at peace indeed, for God hath given you peace; you may be content under all the dispensations

of providence, for nothing can happen to you now, but what shall be the effect of God's love to your soul; you need not fear what fightings may be without, seeing there is peace within. Have you closed with Christ? Is God your friend? Is Christ your friend? Then look up with comfort; all is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Everything shall work together for your good; the very hairs of your head are numbered; he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of God's eye. But then, my dear friends, beware of resting on your first conversion. You that are young believers in Christ, you should be looking out for fresh discoveries of the Lord Jesus Christ every moment; you must not build upon your past experiences, you must not build upon a work within you, but always come out of yourselves to the righteousness of Jesus Christ without you; you must be always coming as poor sinners to draw water out of the wells of salvation; you must be forgetting the things that are behind, and be continually pressing forward to the things that are before. My dear friends, you must keep up a tender, close walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many of us who lose our peace by our untender walk; something or other gets in betwixt Christ and us, and we fall into darkness; something or other steals our hearts from God, and this grieves the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost leaves us to ourselves. Let me, therefore, exhort you that have got peace with God, to take care that you do not lose this peace. It is true, if you are once in Christ, you cannot finally fall from God: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;" but if you cannot fall finally, you may fall foully, and may go with broken bones all your days. Take care of backslidings; for Jesus Christ's sake, do not grieve the Holy Ghost—you may never recover your comfort while you live. O take care of going a gadding and wandering from God, after you have closed with Jesus Christ. My dear friends, I have paid dear for back-



sliding. Our hearts are so cursedly wicked, that if you take not care, if you do not keep up a constant watch, your wicked hearts will deceive you, and draw you aside. It will be sad to be under the scourge of a correcting Father; witness the visitations of Job, David, and other saints in Scripture. Let me, therefore, exhort you that have got peace to keep a close walk with Christ. I am grieved with the loose walk of those that are Christians, that have had discoveries of Jesus Christ; there is so little difference betwixt them and other people, that I scarce know which is the true Christian. Christians are afraid to speak for God—they run down with the stream; if they come into worldly company, they will talk of the world as if they were in their element; this you would not do when you had the first discoveries of Christ's love; you could talk then of Christ's love for ever, when the candle of the Lord shined upon your soul. That time has been when you had something to say for your dear Lord; but now you can go into company and hear others speaking about the world bold enough, and you are afraid of being laughed at if you speak for Jesus Christ. A great many people have grown conformists now in the worst sense of the word; they will cry out against the ceremonies of the church, as they may justly do; but then you are mighty fond of ceremonies in your behavior; you will conform to the world, which is a great deal worse. Many will stay till the devil bring up new fashions. Take care, then, not to be conformed to the world. What have Christians to do with the world? Christians should be singularly good, bold for their Lord, that all who are with you may take notice that you have been with Jesus. I would exhort you to come to a settlement in Jesus Christ, so as to have a continual abiding of God in your heart. We go a-building on our faith of adherence, and lose our comfort; but we should be growing up to a faith of assurance, to know that we are God's, and so walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost

and be edified. Jesus Christ is now much wounded in the house of his friends. Excuse me in being particular; for, my friends, it grieves me more that Jesus Christ should be wounded by his friends than by his enemies. We cannot expect anything else from Deists; but for such as have felt his power to fall away, for them not to walk agreeably to the vocation wherewith they are called—by these means we bring our Lord's religion into contempt, to be a by-word among the heathen. For Christ's sake, if you know Christ keep close by him; if God have spoken peace, O keep that peace by looking up to Jesus Christ every moment. Such as have got peace with God, if you are under trials, fear not, all things shall work for your good; if you are under temptations, fear not. If he has spoken peace to your hearts, all these things shall be for your good.

But what shall I say to you that have got no peace with God?—and these are, perhaps, the most of this congregation; it makes me weep to think of it. Most of you, if you examine your hearts, must confess that God never yet spoke peace to you; you are children of the devil, if Christ is not in you, if God has not spoken peace to your heart. Poor soul! what a cursed condition are you in! I would not be in your case for ten thousand, thousand worlds. Why? You are just hanging over hell. What peace can you have when God is your enemy, when the wrath of God is abiding upon your poor soul? Awake, then, you that are sleeping in a false peace; awake, ye carnal professors, ye hypocrites that go to church, receive the sacrament, read your Bibles, and never felt the power of God upon your hearts; you that are formal professors, you that are baptized heathens; awake, awake, and do not rest on a false bottom. Blame me not for addressing myself to you; indeed, it is out of love to your souls. I see you are lingering in your Sodom, and wanting to stay there; but I come to you as the angel did to Lot, to take you by the hand. Come away, my dear brethren—fly, fly,

fly for your lives to Jesus Christ, fly to a bleeding God, fly to a throne of grace; and beg of God to break your hearts, beg of God to convince you of your actual sins, beg of God to convince you of your original sin, beg of God to convince you of your self-righteousness—beg of God to give you faith, and to enable you to close with Jesus Christ. O you that are secure, I must be a son of thunder to you, and O that God may awaken you, though it be with thunder: it is out of love, indeed, that I speak to you. I know by sad experience what it is to be lulled asleep with a false peace; long was I lulled asleep, long did I think myself a Christian, when I knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ. I went perhaps farther than many of you do; I used to fast twice a week, I used to pray sometimes nine times a day, I used to receive the sacrament constantly every Lord's-day; and yet I knew nothing of Jesus Christ in my heart, I knew not that I must be a new creature—I knew nothing of inward religion in my soul. And perhaps, many of you may be deceived as I, poor creature, was; and, therefore, it is out of love to you indeed, that I speak to you. O if you do not take care, a form of religion will destroy your soul; you will rest in it, and will not come to Jesus Christ at all; whereas, these things are only the means, and not the end of religion; Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe. O, then, awake, you that are settled on your lees; awake you Church professors; awake you that have got a name to live, that are rich and think you want nothing, not considering that you are poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel you to come and buy of Jesus Christ gold, white raiment, and eye-salve. But I hope there are some that are a little wounded; I hope God does not intend to let me preach in vain; I hope God will reach some of your precious souls, and awaken some of you out of your carnal security; I hope there are some who are willing to come to Christ, and beginning to think that they have been building

upon a false foundation. Perhaps the devil may strike in, and bid you despair of mercy; but fear not, what I have been speaking to you is only out of love to you—is only to awaken you, and let you see your danger. If any of you are willing to be reconciled to God, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is willing to be reconciled to you. O then, though you have no peace as yet, come away to Jesus Christ; he is our peace, he is our peace-maker—he has made peace betwixt God and offending man. Would you have peace with God? Away, then, to God through Jesus Christ, who has purchased peace; the Lord Jesus has shed his heart's blood for this. He died for this; he rose again for this; he ascended into the highest heaven, and is now interceding at the right hand of God. Perhaps you think there will be no peace for you. Why so? Because you are sinners? because you have crucified Christ—you have put him to open shame—you have trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God? What of all this? Yet there is peace for you. Pray, what did Jesus Christ say to his disciples, when he came to them the first day of the week? The first word he said was, "Peace be unto you;" he showed them his hands and his side, and said, "Peace be unto you." It is as much as if he had said, Fear not, my disciples; see my hands and my feet how they have been pierced for your sake; therefore, fear not. How did Christ speak to his disciples? "Go tell my brethren, and tell broken-hearted Peter in particular, that Christ is risen; that he is ascended unto his Father and your Father, to his God and your God." And after Christ rose from the dead, he came preaching peace, with an olive branch of peace, like Noah's dove: "My peace I leave with you." Who were they? They were enemies of Christ as well as we, they were deniers of Christ once as well as we. Perhaps some of you have backslidden and lost your peace, and you think you deserve no peace; and no more you do. But, then, God will heal your backslidings, he will love you

freely. As for you that are wounded, if you are made willing to come to Christ, come away. Perhaps some of you want to dress yourselves in your duties, that are but rotten rags. No, you had better come naked as you are, for you must throw aside your rags, and come in your blood. Some of you may say, We would come, but we have got a hard heart. But you will never get it made soft till ye come to Christ; he will take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh; he will speak peace to your souls; though ye have betrayed him, yet he will be your peace. Shall I prevail upon any of you this morning to come to Jesus Christ? There is a great multitude of souls here; how shortly must you all die, and go to judgment! Even before night, or to-morrow's night, some of you may be laid out for this kirk-yard. And how will you do if you be not at peace with God—if the Lord Jesus Christ has not spoken peace to your heart? If God speak not peace to you here, you will be damned for ever. I must not flatter you, my dear friends, I will deal sincerely with your souls. Some of you may think I carry things too far. But, indeed, when you come to judgment, you will find what I say is true, either to your eternal damnation or comfort. May God influence your hearts to come to him! I am not willing to go away without persuading you. I cannot be persuaded but God may make use of me as a means of persuading some of you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. O! did you but feel the peace which they have that love the Lord Jesus Christ! "Great peace have they," says the psalmist, "that love thy law; nothing shall offend them." But there is no peace to the wicked. I know what it is to live a life of sin; I was obliged to sin in order to stifle conviction. And I am sure this is the way many of you take; if you get into company, you drive off conviction. But you had better go to the bottom at once; it must be done—your wound must be searched, or you must be damned. If it

were a matter of indifference, I would not speak one word about it. But you will be damned without Christ. He is the way, he is the truth, and the life. I cannot think you should go to hell without Christ. How can you dwell with everlasting burnings? How can you abide the thought of living with the devil for ever? Is it not better to have some soul-trouble here, than to be sent to hell by Jesus Christ hereafter? What is hell, but to be absent from Christ? If there were no other hell, that would be hell enough. It will be hell to be tormented with the devil for ever. Get acquaintance with God, then, and be at peace. I beseech you, as a poor worthless ambassador of Jesus Christ, that you would be reconciled to God. My business this morning, the first day of the week, is to tell you that Christ is willing to be reconciled to you. Will any of you be reconciled to Jesus Christ? Then he will forgive you all your sins, he will blot out all your transgressions. But if you will go on and rebel against Christ, and stab him daily—if you will go on and abuse Jesus Christ, the wrath of God you must expect will fall upon you. God will not be mocked; that which a man soweth, that shall he also reap. And if you will not be at peace with God, God will not be at peace with you. Who can stand before God when he is angry? It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. When the people came to apprehend Christ, they fell to the ground when Jesus said, "I am he." And if they could not bear the sight of Christ when clothed with the rags of mortality, how will they bear the sight of him when he is on his father's throne? Methinks I see the poor wretches dragged out of their graves by the devil; methinks I see them trembling, crying out to the hills and rocks to cover them. But the devil will say, Come, I will take you away; and then they shall stand trembling before the judgment-seat of Christ. They shall appear before him to see him once, and hear him pronounce that irrevocable sentence,

“Depart from me, ye cursed.” Methinks I hear the poor creatures saying, Lord, if we must be damned, let some angel pronounce the sentence. No, the God of love, Jesus Christ, will pronounce it. Will ye not believe this? Do not think I am talking at random, but agreeably to the Scriptures of truth. If you do not, then show yourselves men, and this morning go away with full resolution, in the strength of God, to cleave to Christ. And may you have no rest in your souls till you rest in Jesus Christ! I could still go on, for it is sweet to talk of Christ. Do you not long for the time when you shall have new bodies—when they shall be immortal, and made like Christ’s glorious body? and then they will talk of Jesus Christ for evermore. But it is time, perhaps, for you to go and prepare for your respective worship, and I would not hinder any of you. My design is, to bring poor sinners to Jesus Christ. O that God may bring some of you to himself! May the Lord Jesus now dismiss you with his blessing, and may the dear Redeemer convince you that are unawakened, and turn the wicked from the evil of their way! And may the love of God, that passeth all understanding, fill your hearts! Grant this, O Father, for Christ’s sake; to whom, with thee and the blessed Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

### XIII.

#### KEEPING ALIVE THE LOVE OF GOD.

ALEXANDER.

[ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D.D. (a name of strength in the Presbyterian Church), was born in Rockbridge county, Virginia, in 1772, and died in 1851. He was educated at Hampden-Sydney College, and licensed to preach at the age of nineteen. Five years later he was appointed president of that institution, and in 1807 became Pastor of the Pine Street Church, Philadelphia. Dr. Alexander spent the last forty years of his life in organizing and strengthening Princeton Theological Seminary. As a preacher and writer, his style was simple, direct, and attractive. His "Evidences of Revealed Religion," "Bible Dictionary," "Advice to the Young Christian," and "Counsel from the Aged to the Young," are popular works. Three of his five sons were ministers, and two of these distinguished professors. Our extract is made, by permission, from his "Practical Sermons," issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.]

*"Keep yourselves in the love of God."*—Jude 21.

THE phrase "love of God," has two significations in the New Testament. First, it imports God's love to us: secondly, our love to God.

In the former sense, it is read in the following passages. Rom. v. 5, "For the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Rom. viii. 39, "Nor any creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." Tit. iii. 5, "But after that the kindness and love of God to man appeared." 1 John iii. 16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." 1 John iv. 9, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us," &c.

It is used in the latter sense in Luke xi. 42, "But pass by judgment and the love of God." John v. 42, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." 2 Thess.



iii. 5, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God."  
1 John ii. 5, "In him, verily the love of God is perfected."  
iii. 17, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" v. 3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." To which may be added the words of our text, "Keep yourselves in the love of God."

Such exhortations do not imply, as some teach, that those addressed possess in themselves a complete ability to perform what is commanded, without divine aid. The maxim that where there is a command, there is always an ability to obey, is a false maxim. The obligation to obedience may remain, when the ability is lost; as is the case with every sinner. The maxim holds good in relation to all creatures, as they proceed from the hands of God. But who would say that the devil is not under obligation to love his Creator; and yet, who would affirm that he has the ability to change his nature from enmity to love? Human agency and divine efficiency are not at war; but sweetly harmonize. God commands what is right, and graciously gives us strength to perform it. It is analogous to what we observe in natural things. It is the duty of the husbandman to plough and sow, and water, but without the genial influences of heaven, the sun, air, and rain, he cannot have a crop. God must "give the increase." The true principle is taught by Paul, Phil. ii. 12, 13. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure." Our dependence on God is no reason why we should sit still and be idle, but a good reason for our being up and doing. It will be admitted by all, that the love of God is the essence of true religion, under every dispensation. It was the law of Paradise. It was the sum and substance of the ten commandments, uttered in a voice of thunder from Sinai, and

written by the finger of God on tables of stone; and it is the soul of gospel obedience. It is unnecessary to attempt any analysis of love. It is too simple for definition, and too well known to all men, to need any explanation of its nature. But as the word includes more than one affection, it may be useful to employ a few words in showing what is usually comprehended under the term. When it is put for all moral obedience, it is used as a generic term, and comprehends all the desires and affections of the heart, which have God for their object, such as admiration, reverence, and confidence. But in its stricter sense, as meaning what is commonly understood by love, it comprehends three affections, which are easily distinguishable. The first terminates on the moral excellence of the divine character, and is termed esteem or complacency. The second has for its object the glory and felicity of God, and ardently seeks the manifestation of his glory, and rejoices in his infinite and unchangeable blessedness. The third is that flow of affection which is excited in the susceptible heart, by the reception of benefits, and is called gratitude. We may exercise benevolence toward one for whom we can feel no esteem; and we may feel esteem and benevolence toward one to whom we owe no debt of gratitude. But in regard to God, all these unite and combine, in that state of heart, in which true holiness or piety consists. We love God for what he is. We rejoice in his glory and felicity, and we feel gratitude for his unnumbered and unspeakable benefits. This is the love of God. The loss of this was the greatest injury sustained by the fall. The recovery of a disposition to love God supremely, is the richest blessing brought to us by the gospel. This is the end of redemption. By regeneration love is implanted again in the human soul, which has a natural capacity for this affection; so that when implanted, it takes deep root. But in the beginning, this affection is commonly feeble: in all, it is imperfect. The

spiritual birth is analogous to the natural. All partake of life by this birth, but not all in an equal degree. Some are strong and lively from the moment of their conversion, while others are weak and sickly, and at first give symptoms of vitality so equivocal, that for some time, it may remain doubtful whether they are dead or alive. But these feeble babes, by means of the sincere milk of the word, may outgrow, and come nearer to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, than those who commenced their spiritual existence under auspices much more favorable. In all, there is room for growth in grace, that is, in love, while they are tenants of these houses of clay. The exhortation in the text implies that Christians are liable to lose the fervor of their first love. They are, indeed, prone to declension. The course of the Christian is like that of a man rowing up the stream; if he is remiss for one moment, he loses some part of the distance before gained. All the tendencies of nature within him are downward; and all the influence from the world is in the same direction. There is need, therefore, of constant exertion. We must not be slothful, nor grow weary in well-doing.

In the sequel, some directions for keeping ourselves in the love of God will be given; and some motives presented, to stimulate my hearers to engage heartily in this work.

DIRECTIONS FOR KEEPING THE HEART IN THE LOVE OF GOD.

1. Carefully shun all those circumstances and things which are known to have a tendency to damp the fervors of love, or to extinguish this holy fire. Here a large field opens, but we have not time to occupy it. A few things only, out of many, can be noticed. Above all, avoid every sinful indulgence. Known, allowed sins, of every kind, are as water to the fire. The love of God cannot live in the heart, where any sin is indulged. Fleshly lusts war against this holy principle. Flee youthful lusts. The love

of the world is a common and insidious foe. Avarice may be indulged to a great extent, and yet no overt act committed which will alarm the conscience. We should remember that solemn warning, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Love not the world nor the things that are in the world." Desire of the good opinion of men, often leads even Christians to an undue conformity to the world. "How can ye believe," says our Lord, "who receive honor one from another?"

The neglect, or careless performance, of the duties of the closet, cannot but have the effect of cooling the ardor of piety in the soul; especially the neglect of reading the word of God, which is calculated to furnish fuel to the fire of divine love.

Avoid, also, contention and strife, as exceedingly inimical to the peaceful spirit of piety. "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

Every species of pride and vain glory, tends to extinguish the holy fervors of divine love.

In short, whatever thought, feeling, desire, imagination, word, or action has a tendency to grieve the Holy Spirit, should be solicitously avoided.

2. To keep ourselves in the love of God, we should often meditate on the superlative moral excellence of the divine character, as displayed in his works and word. The habit of associating the idea of God with every object of nature, is one of the happiest which can be formed. It brings God near to us wherever we are, or whatever we may be doing. In all our blessings and enjoyments, we should gratefully acknowledge God as the Author, "the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good gift, and every perfect gift."

God's providential dealings toward us, personally, in giving us so favorable a lot, in the circumstances of our birth and education in a land of churches, Sabbaths, and Bibles,

and in preserving our lives in the midst of dangers, or rescuing us from the grave, when in an unprepared state, should have a powerful effect in stirring up our minds to acts of gratitude.

But nothing so powerfully affects the mind which has within it the principles of true piety, as a contemplation of the love of God as manifested in the gift of his only begotten and well-beloved Son, to die on the cross for our salvation. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "We love him because he first loved us." Nothing is so powerful to excite love as the well-grounded persuasion of the love of God to us. This motive so frequently presented in the Scriptures should not be repudiated as unworthy, or selfish. It is a noble trait in any mind to be susceptible of lively gratitude, for benefits received. Much of true piety on earth, and much of the holy exercises of heaven, consist in the flow of grateful affection. "To him who loved us, and gave himself for us, be honor and glory and praise," will be the everlasting song of the redeemed.

3. Every habit and affection is preserved in vigor, and increased by frequent exercise. If we desire to strengthen any member of our body, or to render our senses more acute and susceptible, we find no method more effectual than to exercise incessantly those parts which we wish to improve. Habits and affections of the mind follow the same law, and are strengthened imperceptibly, but powerfully, by exercise. Even in regard to our affection to earthly friends, if we seldom think of them, and do not enjoy their company, our love grows cold. Hence, memorials of absent friends, and correspondence by letters, are so much in use; for it is found, that the frequent recollection of those whom we love, keeps alive our affection, which otherwise would be apt to die away for want of exercise. Thus it behoves us to keep ourselves in the love of God, by frequently calling up in

our minds the idea of his excellence and his ineffable love to us.

The cultivation of other holy affections, and the conscientious discharge of all incumbent duties, will also help to preserve alive our love to God.

4. The greatest hinderance to the exercise and increase of our love to God, is our blindness of mind and unbelief. The objects of sense too much occupy and interest us; while spiritual and invisible objects are obscurely perceived, and make a feeble and transient impression on the mind. Although we know that God is ever present with us, and takes cognisance of all our thoughts and actions; yet how little are we affected, habitually, by this truth!

In order, therefore, to preserve our souls in the lively exercise of the love of God, we must seek an increase of that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen"—that faith which "sees him, that is invisible"—which "looks not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal." The close connection between faith and love is manifest from the nature of the case; as no object can be loved which is not perceived; and the more vividly an object of love is presented to the mind, the more is the affection increased in vigor. The Scriptures also teach, that it is "faith which works by love." This connection between faith and love is distinctly and explicitly taught in the context, "Wherefore, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." Let us, then, often present that important petition, "Lord, increase our faith."

5. But in the words just recited, we are admonished that this desirable object cannot be accomplished by mere human effort. It is a solemn truth, that "without Christ we can do nothing." Hence, while we are exhorted to act, and to exert ourselves to exercise faith, and to keep ourselves in

the love of God, we are instructed to "pray in the Holy Ghost." Without the efficient aid of this divine agent, all our efforts will be fruitless; but Christ has graciously assured us, that the Holy Spirit will be given to those who ask for this best of gifts. We need this aid that we may pray aright, "praying in the Holy Ghost," and we need the same efficient operation to give exercise to faith and love, and every grace. It is a delightful promise, that the Holy Spirit shall take up his abode in believers; so that their bodies become, as it were, temples of God. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

II. The motives which should induce us to use all means to keep our souls in the love of God, are the strongest that can be conceived.

1. By doing this we shall best glorify God upon earth. Every true Christian has this as his chief end, but all do not keep the object sufficiently before their minds; and all do not pursue steadily that course which leads directly to this end. Inferior objects, because they are present and visible, and occupy the attention of those around us, too frequently draw us off from our proper course. Now, to prevent this forgetfulness and unsteadiness, nothing will be so effectual as the lively exercise of the love of God. This holy affection will give a right direction to the thoughts.

and elevate the heart from low and grovelling, to high and heavenly objects. The love of God will give alacrity and energy in the performance of every duty; will enable us to bear with patience every affliction; and will render our devotional exercises not only pleasant, but profitable. Unless we have the love of God in exercise, we cannot glorify him; and our most painful services will be worthless.

2. The next motive which should influence us to perform faithfully the duty enjoined in the text, is, that this will be the most effectual method of promoting the welfare and salvation of our fellow-creatures. Man is not placed here to live merely for himself. He is bound to love his neighbor as himself—to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith. He should imitate his divine Master, who went about doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men. Christ expects his disciples to abound in good works, to let their light shine, that others seeing their good works may glorify their Father in heaven. And when he comes to collect his sheep into the eternal fold, he will make their affectionate assiduity in ministering to the necessities and comfort of his poor and afflicted brethren, the measure of the reward which he will confer on them. Now, the love of God is the root from which every branch of true piety springs. The love of our neighbor cannot exist in vigor, unless it derive daily strength from the love of God. If, then, you would abound in the fruits of holiness, be careful to water the root. “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” and you will not cease to do good, as you may have opportunity, to your fellow-men.

3. Lastly, the more we keep ourselves in the love of God, the more meet shall we be for the heavenly inheritance, where perfect love reigns in every heart. Not only so, but the richer reward will be possessed; for notwithstanding the imperfection of our services, God is pleased to make our



good works here, the measure of the reward which he will bestow hereafter. All his people are equally justified, but all will not be equally glorified. "In our Father's house are many mansions," and some are doubtless much nearer to the celestial throne than others. Some saints will occupy, in heaven, a much higher and more honorable place than others. All will be as happy as they are capable of being; but the capacity of those who loved God most fervently and constantly, will be greater than that of those who loved less.

## XIV.

### ACCESS TO GOD.

FOSTER.

[JOHN FOSTER, a profound, liberal, and eloquent English essayist on morals, was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, September 17th 1770. He graduated for the ministry from the Baptist College at Bristol, and spent several years in pastoral duties. The larger part of his life, however, was devoted to literature, and mainly to contributions to the Eclectic Review. He died at Stapleton, in 1843. Of his writings the most famous are: "Essays On Decision of Character," "On the Evils of Popular Ignorance," and this sermon on "Access to God." The latter was republished by the Religious Tract Society, and is also contained in volume second of "Lectures Delivered at Broadmead Chapel, Bristol," shortly before his death. It has a depth and grasp of thought that especially commend it to the honest inquirer and searcher after religious truth.]

*"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*—Hebrews xi. 6.

No saying is more common among us, or perhaps leaves a more transient impression, than that to approach to God, while enjoined as a duty, is also an eminent privilege. As no one thinks of questioning it, we easily let it pass, as if there needed no more but to assent to it.

That it can thus be an unmeaning sentence, a lifeless notion, indistinctly presented to the apprehension, and holding no communication with the affections, betrays that the soul is taking little account of its best resources for happiness. But such it will be, unless we can be serious enough for an exercise of thought, to apprehend as a great and interesting reality what we have so often allowed ourselves to hear, or to utter, as little more than an insignificant common-place of religious discourse. Can we be content it should be so? When it is understood that, among the things

possible to man, is the very extraordinary one of "*coming to God*," shall we not make a faithful, earnest effort, that the thing so affirmed and believed may have to us all the effect of a reality, in being brought with clearness to our apprehension, and with power over our feelings?

It is a wonderful idea, even as apprehended at once, in a single act of thought, without intermediate process of advancing from less to greater, in ascent towards the greatest—the idea of the infinite, almighty, eternal Being, as to be approached, and spoken to, and communicated with, by *man*. But a gradation of thought, a progressive rising toward the transcendent and supreme, might contribute to magnify the wonderfulness of the fact, of man daring and permitted to enter into a direct communication with God.—But by what order and train of ideas might we seek to advance towards the magnificence of the contemplation?

If we might allow ourselves in such an imagination, as that the selected portion of all humanity, the very best and wisest persons on earth, were brought and combined into a permanent assembly, and invested with a sovereign authority—the highest wisdom, virtue, science, and power thus united—would not a perfectly free access for the humblest, poorest, most distressed, and otherwise friendless, to such an assemblage, with a certainty of their most kind and sedulous attention being given—of their constant *will* to render aid—of their wisdom and power being promptly exercised—would not this be deemed an inestimable privilege to all within the compass of such an empire? Indeed, if such a thing might be (an extravagantly wild imagination, we confess), it would take the place of Providence in the minds of the multitude, and be idolized.

But take a higher position; and suppose that there were such an economy that the most illustrious of the *departed saints* held the office of being practically, though unseen, patrons, protectors, assistants, guides, to men on earth; that

the spirits of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, could be drawn, by those who desired it, to a direct personal attention, and to an exercise of their benignity and interference—would not this appear a resource of incalculable value? It is because it naturally would be so, that the Romish church was so successful in imposing on the people the fiction of such an economy as an undoubted reality (and, indeed, paganism had before done something of a similar kind). So gratifying, so consoling, so animating, has this imaginary privilege been felt by millions of that church, that their devotion has seemed actually to stop at this level of invisible existence; the Almighty Father, and the Redeemer, comparatively forgotten.

But there is *another* far loftier ascension. We are informed of a glorious order of intelligences that have never dwelt in flesh; many of whom may have enjoyed their existence from a remoteness of time surpassing what we can conceive of eternity; with an immense expansion of being and powers; with a perpetual augmentation of the goodness inspired by their Creator; and exercising their virtues and unknown powers in appointed offices of beneficence throughout the system of unnumbered worlds. Would it not seem a pre-eminent privilege, if the children of the dust might obtain a direct communication with them; might invoke them, accost them, draw them to a fixed attention, and with a sensible evidence of their indulgent patience and celestial benignity? Would not this seem an exaltation of felicity, throwing into shade everything that could be imagined to be derived to us from the benevolence and power of mortal or glorified humanity?

Now, here we are at the summit of created existence; and up to this sublime elevation we have none of these supposed privileges. No! there is no such conjunction of the greatest virtue, wisdom, and power on earth. Departed saints have no appointment to hear our petitions; and when we perceive,

as it were, the distant radiance of an inconceivably nobler order of beings, it is with the consciousness that we cannot come into their sensible presence and recognition, cannot invoke their express attention, cannot lay hold on their power, cannot commit to them the momentous charge of our interests.

Thus we have ascended by degrees to the most illustrious of created beings, for the transient luxury of imagining what it would be to engage in our favor the intelligence, goodness, and power of those glorious spirits; but to find ourselves hopelessly far off from such access. In the capacity of receiving our petitions, they exist not for us; as to *that* object, these mighty agents are strangers to us.

What, then, to do next? Next, our spirits have to raise their thoughts to an awful elevation above all subordinate existence in earth and heaven, in order to approach a presence where they *may* implore a beneficent attention, and enter into a communication with Him who is uncreated and infinite; a transition compared to which the distance from the inferior to the nobler, and then to the noblest of created beings, is reduced to nothing; as one lofty eminence on an elevated mountain—and a higher,—and the highest—but thence to the starry heavens!

But think, who is it that is thus to "*come to God!*" Man! little, feeble, mortal, fallen, sinful man! He is, if we may speak in such language, to venture an act expressly to arrest the attention of that stupendous Being; to signify, in the most direct manner, that he is by choice and design in that presence intentionally to draw on himself the notice, the aspect of the Almighty. The purpose is, to speak to Him in a *personal manner*; to detain Him in communication. The approaching petitioner is to utter thoughts, for God to admit them into *His* thoughts! He would cause himself to be distinctly and individually listened to by a Being who is receiving the adoration of the most exalted

spirits, and of all the holy intelligences in the universe; by Him whose power is sustaining and governing all its regions and inhabitants. He seeks to cause *his words* to be listened to by Him whose *own words* may be, at the very time, commanding new creations into existence.

But reflect, also, that it is an act to call the special attention of Him whose purity has a perfect perception of all that is evil, that is unholy, in the creature that approaches Him; of Him whom the applicant is conscious he has not, to the utmost of his faculties, adored or loved: alas! the very contrary.

What a striking, what an amazing view is thus presented of the situation the unworthy mortal is placed in, the position which he presumes to take, in "*coming to God.*" How surprising then it is, how alarming it well may be, to reflect on the manner in which, too often, we use this privilege! What a miserably faint conception of the Sovereign Majesty! A reverence so defective in solemnity, that it admits the intrusion of every trivial suggestion. Thoughts easily diverted away by the slightest casual association. An inanimate state of feeling, indifference almost, in petitioning the greatest blessings, and deprecating the most fearful evils. So that, on serious reflection, the consciousness would be forced upon us, of its being too much to hope that such devotions can be accepted, such petitions granted.

To rebuke this irreligion, infesting and spoiling the very acts of religion, think again of the situation of such a creature as man coming into the immediate presence of the Divine Majesty. The very extremes of spiritual existence—the infinitely Most Glorious, and the lowest, meanest of all, brought into communication; the absolutely holy, and the miserably depraved—the guilty. We may conceive that a creature of even such humble rank as man, if he were but perfectly innocent, might approach to a communication with the Eternal and Infinite Essence, though not without inex-

pressible awe, yet without terror; but since he is impure and guilty, the idea of his "*coming to God*" would be no other than the image of a perishable thing brought within the action of "*a consuming fire*;" the moral quality of the Divine Nature being in direct antipathy to that of such a creature approaching. Let a man, really and deeply affected with the debasement of his nature and his individual guilt, stand consciously before the all-perfect holiness of God; let him think what it must be to come in immediate *contact* (shall we say?) with that holiness; every look at his sinfulness, every secret accusation of his conscience, would fix and determine his attention to the Divine holiness—irresistibly so—rather than to any other attribute: for in all comparisons, even with our fellow-men, our attention fixes the most strongly on that in which we are the most in contrast and antipathy with them, especially when the contrast presents something for us to fear. So with a creature consciously full of sin in immediate approach to Him who is "*glorious in holiness*;" the attention would be arrested by that, as an opposite, a hostile, and a terrible quality; and the longer it were beheld, the more it would appear kindling and glowing into a consuming flame.

A sinful being immediately under the burning rays of Omnipotent Holiness! The idea is so fearful, that one might think it should be the most earnest, the most passionate desire of a human soul, that there should be some intervention to save it from the fatal predicament. No wonder, then, that the most devout men of every age of the Christian dispensation have welcomed with joy and gratitude the doctrine of a Mediator, manifested in the person of the Son of God, by whom the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man are, as it were, *kept asunder*; and a happy communication can take place through the medium of One who stands before the Divine Majesty of Justice, in man's behalf, with a propitiation and a perfect righteousness.

Thus far, and too long, we have dwelt on the wonderfulness of the fact and the greatness of the privilege of "*coming to God.*" We have to consider, a little, with *what faith* this is to be done. "Must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The fact of the Divine existence must be assumed by the seeker for permanent good. What a condition it were to be looking round and afar into boundless inanity in quest of it! uttering the importunate and plaintive cry, "Who will show us any good?"—directed first to poor fellow-mortals, who can only respond in the same words; and then to the fantastic, shadowy creatures of imagination—nature, fortune, chance, good genii.

"Must believe that he is." Must have a most absolute conviction that there is one Being infinitely unlike and superior to all others; the sole Self-existent, All-comprehending, and All-powerful; a reality in such a sense that all other things are but precarious modes of being, subsisting simply in virtue of his will;—must pass through and beyond the sphere of sense, to have a spiritual sight of "Him that is invisible;" and, more than merely a principle held in the understanding, must verify the solemn reality in a vitally pervading sentiment of the soul.

And what a glory of intellect and faith thus to possess a truth which is the sun in our mental sphere, the supreme itself of all lights, and whence radiate all the illuminations and felicities that can bless the rational creation! And what a casting down from heaven, as it may well be named,—what a spectacle of debasement and desolation is presented to us, when we behold the frightful phenomenon of a rational creature *disbelieving* a God! There are such men, who can look abroad on this amazing universe, and deny there is a supreme intelligent Cause and Director; and if some of these are possessed of extraordinary talent and knowledge, the fact may show what human reason is capable of, when reject-



ing, and rejected by, Divine influence; and we may presage the horrible amazement, when that truth respecting which the lights of science and the splendor of the sky have left them in the dark, shall at length suddenly burst on them!

“He that cometh to God must believe that he is.” But how easily it may be said, “We have that faith; we never denied or doubted that there is such a Being.” Well; but reflect, and ascertain in what degree the general tenor of your feelings, and your habits of life, have been different from what they might have been if you *had* disbelieved or doubted. The expression “*coming to*” him, seems to tell something of a previous *distance*; see, then, what may have been, in a spiritual sense, the distance at which you have lived from him. Has it been the smallest at which a feeble, sinful creature must still necessarily be left, notwithstanding an earnest, persisting effort to approach him; or rather the greatest that a mere notional acknowledgment of his existence would allow? What a wide allowance is that! and what a melancholy condition to have only such a faith concerning the most glorious and beneficent Object, as shall leave us contented to be so far off from him!

This belief cannot bring the soul in effectual approach to God, unless it be a penetrating conviction that the truth so believed is a truth of mightiest import; that, there being a God, we have to do with him every moment; that all will be wrong with us unless this awful reality command and occupy our spirits; that this faith must be the predominating authority over our course through the world, the determining consideration in our volitions and actions. When we say then, that we have this belief, the grave question is, What does it do for us? Are we at a loss to tell what? Can we not verify to ourselves that we have this belief, in any other way than by repeating that we believe?

The effectual faith in the Divine existence always looks to consequences. In acknowledging each glorious attribute, it

regards the aspect which it bears on the worshipper, inferring what will *therefore be* because *that is*. It is not a valid faith in the Divinity, as regarded in any of his attributes, till it excite the solicitous thought, "And what then?" *He is*, as supreme in goodness; and what then? Then, how precious is every assurance from himself that he is accessible to us! Then, is it not the truest insanity in the creation to be careless of his favor? Then, happy they, for ever happy, who obtain that favor, by devoting themselves to seek it. Then, let us instantly and ardently proceed to act on the conviction that he is the "rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

This actuating conviction must be decided and absolute in him that "*cometh to God*." He must feel positively assured it will not be just the same to him, in the event of things, whether he diligently seek God or not. Without this, there cannot be a motive of force enough to draw or impel him to the spiritual enterprise. His soul will stagnate in a comfortless, hopeless, and almost atheistical inaction; or, with a painful activity of imagination, he may picture forth forms of the good which such a being as the Almighty *could* do for him, and then see those visions depart as some vain creations of poetry; or he may try to give to what keeps him afar from God a character of reason and philosophy, by perverted inferences from the unchangeableness of the Divine purposes, or the necessary course of things; or he may pretend a pious dread of presuming to prescribe to the Sovereign Wisdom: all, in effect, terminating in the profane question, "What profit shall we have if we pray to him?"

Without the assured belief that something of immense importance is depending on the alternative of rendering or withholding the homage of devout application, all aspiration is repressed, and we are left, as it were, prone on the earth. We are to hold it for certain, that, even though divers events,

simply as facts, may be the same in either case, yet something involved in them, and in the effect of the whole series of events, will be infinitely different. In each opportune season for coming to God by supplication, at each repetition of the gracious invitations to do so, at each admonition of conscience, there is a voice which tells him that something most invaluable would, *really would*, be gained by sincere, earnest, and constant application. He should say to himself, I am not to remain inactive, as if just waiting to see what will come to pass, like a man expecting the rain or sunshine which he can do nothing to bring on his meadow or garden. If God be true, there is something to be granted to such application, that *will not* be granted without it. As to the particular order of providential dispensation, I can know nothing of the Divine purposes; but, as to the general scope, I do know perfectly that one thing is in God's determination, namely, *to fulfil his promises*. By a humble, faithful, persevering importunity of prayer in the name of Christ, I have an assured hold upon,—or, by a neglect of it, I let loose from my grasp and hope,—all those things which he has promised to such prayer. I am, then, assured he is the “*rewarder*,” inasmuch as I know *it will not be all the same to me whether I seek him or not*. And here we may instantly break through all speculative sophistry, by appealing to any man who believes anything of revelation: “Do you really believe that it will not, in the final result, and even in this world too, make a vast difference whether you shall or shall not be habitually, through life, an earnest applicant for the Divine blessing? Answer this question; answer it to yourself, from your inmost conviction.”

Let it be observed here, that, God having indicated by his precepts the way in which, conditionally, he will manifest his goodness to men, that way, as so set forth, must be the best. It is not, therefore, a mere dictate of sovereign authority, but a wise adjustment of the means for men's happiness.

His goodness is not greater in his willingness to confer his favors, than in the appointment *how* they shall be conferred ; that is, the preceptive rule according to which we are to expect them.

That preceptive rule is conspicuous throughout the Bible. That we should "*seek God*," in the way of unceasing application for his mercies, is inculcated and reiterated in every form of cogent expression. Then we are justly required to believe, confidently, that as this is the very best and only expedient, God will combine the happiness of his servants with their faithful observance of an injunction *intended* for their happiness ; that it will be attended by tokens of the Divine complacency ; that in keeping the precept there will be "*great reward*." Like Enoch, they will have "this testimony, that they pleased God."

"Must believe that he is the rewarder." This faith is required in consideration of the intention (might we presume to say, reverently, the sincerity ?) of the heavenly Father in calling men to come to him. "I have not said, Seek ye me in vain." To what purpose are they thus required to make his favor the object of their eternal aspiration ; to forego all things rather than this ; to renounce, for this, everything which it is the perverted tendency of the human soul to prefer ; to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee ?" Why invited to give their affections, devote their life, and their very existence, to acknowledge their dependence, and testify their confidence by unceasing petitions, and to strive fervently to obtain a more intimate access to him ? Why thus summoned, and trained, and exercised, to a lofty ambition far above the world ? Not to frustrate all this labor, not to disappoint them of the felicity to which they continually aspire ! They "must believe that he is a rewarder ;" that he is not thus calling and constraining them up a long, laborious ascent, only that they may behold his glorious

throne, come near to his blissful paradise, do him homage at its gate, and then be shut out.

Consider again: it is because there is a Mediator, that sinful men presume, and are authorized, to approach to God, seeking that—no more than that—which the mysterious appointment was made, in Divine justice and mercy, for the purpose of conferring on them. Then they *must* believe, that this glorious office cannot but be availing to their success. There is a peculiar virtue in such a special, remedial interposition to secure its own infallible efficacy, since it was expressly because the original constitution of our nature had failed, and must remain powerless and hopeless for happiness, that this special and extraordinary one was brought into existence; and an expedient which has been adopted, in the Divine government, to accomplish an end for which all else has been proved incompetent, must have a special and peculiar sufficiency for that end. What has been appointed, in the last resort, in substitution and in remedy of an antecedent economy, because that has failed, must be, by eminence, of a nature not *itself* to fail. It rises up conspicuous and impregnable when all around has sunk in ruin; like some mighty rock brought up into the light, and standing high in immovable stability, in the rending and subsidence of the ground by earthquake.

They that “*come to God*” in confidence on this new Divine constitution, will find that he, in justice to his appointment of a Mediator, will grant what is promised and sought in *virtue of it*; in other words, will be a “*rewarder*” for Christ’s sake. And what is that in which it will be verified to them “*that he is a rewarder?*” For *what* will they have to adore and bless him as such? For the grandest benefits which even He can impart—can impart in doing full justice to the infinite merits of the appointed Redeemer.—An inestimable privilege! that those greatest blessings may be asked for, positively and specifically; whereas the minor benefits

are to be requested conditionally, and it is better that the applicants should *not* be certain of obtaining them. It is enough for their faith as to these, that an infinitely wiser judgment than theirs will be exercised in selecting, giving, withholding, adjusting.

But the important admonition, to be repeated here in concluding, is, that all this is for them "*that diligently seek*;" so habitually, importunately, perseveringly, that it shall really, and in good faith, be made the primary concern of our life; so that, while wishes and impulses to *obtain* are incessantly springing and darting from the busy soul in divers directions, there shall still be one predominant impulse directed towards heaven. And, if such representations as we have been looking at be true, think—(it is truly a most striking reflection),—think what *might* be obtained by all of us, who have them at this hour soliciting our attention, on the supposition that we all should henceforward be earnest applicants to the Sovereign Rewarder. Think of the mighty amount of good, in time and eternity, as our collective wealth; and of the value of every individual share.

We said, "on the supposition;" but why are we to admit a word so ominous? for while, on the one side, it points to a grand sum of good, with an averment of Him who has it to give that it may be ours, it darkly intimates, on the other, that possibly it *may not*, may never be ours; that we may practically *consent that it shall not*. But *may* we, believing such things all the while, may we really so consent? With such treasure held forth in our view, and for our attainment, by the munificent Benefactor, and seeing some of our companions actually attaining it, can we consent to a melancholy destitution by foregoing it? Consent to forego! And to what is it that such consent would be yielded? Could it be to anything else than a malignant, dire, accursed perversity of our nature? No terms of execration are too intense for the noxious thing, within our own selves, that

stupefies our affections and our will to the madness of telling our God, in effect, that we can do without his rewards, that he may confer them where they are more desired; while we will look on and see others take them all away, content to retain and cherish in their stead that deadly enemy within, which compels us to let them go.

Can we *not* be so content? Then, finally, what we have the most urgent cause to seek Him for is, that He will deliver us from that which keeps us from Him. We have to implore, "O merciful Power! abolish whatever it is that would detain us at a fatal distance from thee. Let the breath of thy Spirit consume the unbelief, the reluctance, the indifference, the world's enchantments, that would fix us under the doom to '*behold thee, but not nigh.*' Apply to these averse or heedless spirits such a blessed compulsion as shall not leave it even possible for us to be within reach of the sovereign good, and yet linger till all be lost."

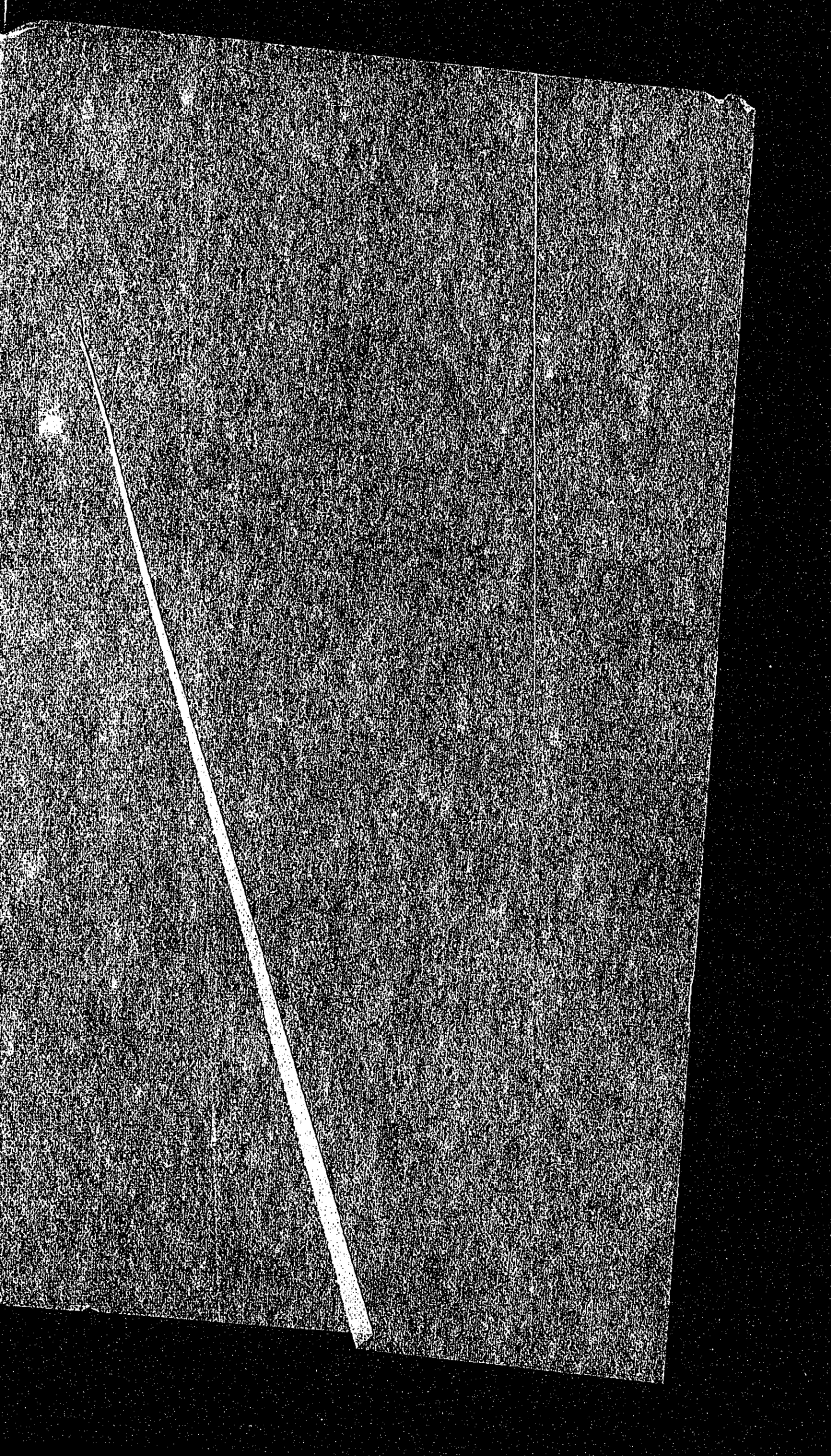
And if, by unwearied seeking, we obtain this, it will emphatically be a "*reward,*" for which all under the sun might be gladly given away.







*Fred W Robertson*





## XV.

### THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST.

ROBERTSON.

[As the grandson and son of English military officers, the aspirations, life, and character of Rev. FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON were naturally permeated with the spirit of fearlessness, manliness, and ardor. He was emphatically a Christian Soldier—brave, impulsive, chivalrous, and wholly unselfish. To these characteristics were added the gifts of great grasp of thought, keen intellectual incisiveness, rare independence of character, acute sensibility to the beautiful, child-like purity of soul, and a tongue nerved with spiritual fire. His Sermons are household words. Yet he is not always a safe guide; for he fails to recognise the fundamental necessity and spirituality of our Redeemer's atonement. In unfolding the humanity of Christ Jesus, and the prerogatives of manliness, he is peerless. Born in London, February 3d 1816; educated at Oxford; at first seeking, but afterwards declining, an army commission; repeatedly battling against a keenly sensitive, overwrought nervous temperament; a curate for four years in Cheltenham; a six years' incumbency in Trinity Chapel, Brighton, ending with his death at the early age of thirty-seven, August 15th 1853: such is his biography, in brief.]

*"Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."*—John xvi. 31, 32.

THERE are two kinds of solitude: the first consisting of insulation in space; the other, of isolation of the spirit. The first is simply separation by distance. When we are seen, touched, heard by none, we are said to be alone. And all hearts respond to the truth of that saying, This is not solitude; for sympathy can people our solitude with a crowd. The fisherman on the ocean alone at night is not alone, when he remembers the earnest longings which are

arising up to heaven at home for his safety. The traveller is not alone, when the faces which will greet him on his arrival seem to beam upon him as he trudges on. The solitary student is not alone, when he feels that human hearts will respond to the truths which he is preparing to address to them.

The other is loneliness of soul. There are times when hands touch ours, but only send an icy chill of unsympathizing indifference to the heart; when eyes gaze into ours, but with a glazed look which cannot read into the bottom of our souls; when words pass from our lips, but only come back as an echo reverberated without reply through a dreary solitude; when the multitude throng and press us, and we cannot say, as Christ said, "Somebody hath *touched* me:" for the contact has been not between soul and soul, but only between form and form.

And there are two kinds of men, who feel this last solitude in different ways. The first are the men of self-reliance,—self-dependent: who ask no counsel, and crave no sympathy; who act and resolve alone,—who can go sternly through duty, and scarcely shrink, let what will be crushed in them. Such men command respect: for whoever respects himself constrains the respect of others. They are invaluable in all those professions of life in which sensitive feeling would be a superfluity: they make iron commanders, surgeons who do not shrink, and statesmen who do not flinch from their purpose for the dread of unpopularity. But mere self-dependence is weakness; and the conflict is terrible when a human sense of weakness is felt by such men. Jacob was alone when he slept in his way to Padan Aram, the first night that he was away from his father's roof, with the world before him, and all the old broken up; and Elijah was alone in the wilderness when the court had deserted him, and he said, "They have digged down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword:

and I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." But the loneliness of the tender Jacob was very different from that of the stern Elijah. To Jacob the sympathy he yearned for was realized in the form of a gentle dream. A ladder raised from earth to heaven figured the possibility of communion between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. In Elijah's case, the storm, and the earthquake, and the fire, did their convulsing work in the soul, before a still, small voice told him that he was not alone. In such a spirit the sense of weakness comes with a burst of agony, and the dreadful conviction of being alone manifests itself with a rending of the heart of rock. It is only so that such souls can be taught that the Father is with them, and that they are not alone.

There is another class of men, who live in sympathy. These are affectionate minds, which tremble at the thought of being alone: not from want of courage nor from weakness of intellect comes their dependence upon others, but from the intensity of their affections. It is the trembling spirit of humanity in them. They want not aid, nor even countenance, but only sympathy. And the trial comes to them not in the shape of fierce struggle, but of chill and utter loneliness, when they are called upon to perform a duty on which the world looks coldly, or to embrace a truth which has not found lodgment yet in the breasts of others.

It is to this latter and not to the former class that we must look, if we would understand the spirit in which the words of the text were pronounced. The deep Humanity of the Soul of Christ was gifted with those finer sensibilities of affectionate nature which stand in need of sympathy. He not only gave sympathy, but wanted it, too, from others. He who selected the gentle John to be his friend,—who found solace in female sympathy, attended by the women who ministered to Him out of their substance,—who in the Trial hour could not bear even to pray without the human

presence, which is the pledge and reminder of God's presence, had nothing in Him of the hard, merely self-dependent character. Even this verse testifies to the same fact. A stern spirit never could have said, "I am not alone: the Father is with me;" never would have felt the loneliness which needed the balancing truth. These words tell of a struggle, an inward reasoning, a difficulty and a reply, a sense of solitude,—“I shall be alone;” and an immediate correction of that: “Not alone: the Father is with Me.”

There is no thought connected with the Life of Christ more touching, none that seems so peculiarly to characterize His Spirit, as the solitariness in which he lived. Those who understood Him best only understood him half. Those who knew Him best scarcely could be said to know Him. On this occasion the disciples thought, Now we do understand, now we do believe. The lonely Spirit answered, “Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.”

Very impressive is that trait in His history. He was in this world alone.

I. First, then, we meditate on the loneliness of Christ.

II. On the temper of His solitude.

1. The loneliness of Christ was caused by the Divine elevation of His character. His infinite superiority severed Him from sympathy; His exquisite affectionateness made that want of sympathy a keen trial.

There is a second-rate greatness which the world can comprehend. If we take two who are brought into direct contrast by Christ Himself, the one the type of human, the other that of Divine excellence, the Son of Man and John the Baptist, this becomes clearly manifest. John's life had a certain rude, rugged goodness, on which was written, in characters which required no magnifying-glass to read, spiritual excellence. The world, on the whole, accepted

him. Pharisees and Sadducees went to his baptism. The people idolized him as a prophet; and, if he had not chanced to cross the path of a weak prince and a revengeful woman, we can see no reason why John might not have finished his course with joy, recognised as irreproachable. If we inquire why it was that the world accepted John and rejected Christ, one reply appears to be, that the life of the one was finitely simple and one-sided, that of the Other divinely complex. In physical nature, the naturalist finds no difficulty in comprehending the simple structure of the lowest organizations of animal life, where one uniform texture, and one organ performing the office of brain and heart and lungs, at once, leave little to perplex. But when he comes to study the complex anatomy of man, he has the labor of a lifetime before him. It is not difficult to master the constitution of a single country; but when you try to understand the universe, you find infinite appearances of contradiction: law opposed by law; motion balanced by motion; happiness blended with misery; and the power to elicit a divine order and unity out of this complex variety is given to only a few of the gifted of the race. That which the structure of man is to the structure of the limpet, that which the universe is to a single country, the complex and boundless soul of Christ was to the souls of other men. Therefore, to the superficial observer, His life was a mass of inconsistencies and contradictions. All thought themselves qualified to point out the discrepancies. The Pharisees could not comprehend how a holy Teacher could eat with publicans and sinners. His own brethren could not reconcile His assumption of a public office with the privacy which He aimed at keeping. "If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world." Some thought He was "a good man;" others said, "Nay, but He deceiveth the people." And hence it was that He lived to see all that acceptance which had marked the earlier stage of His



career—as, for instance, at Capernaum—melt away. First, the Pharisees took the alarm; then the Sadducees; then the political party of the Herodians; then the people. That was the most terrible of all: for the enmity of the upper classes is impotent; but when that cry of brute force is stirred from the depths of society, as deaf to the voice of reason as the ocean in its strength churned into raving foam by the winds, the heart of mere earthly oak quails before that. The apostles, at all events, did quail. One denied; another betrayed; all deserted. They “were scattered, each to his own:” and the Truth Himself was left alone in Pilate’s judgment-hall.

Now learn from this a very important distinction. To feel solitary is no uncommon thing. To complain of being alone, without sympathy, and misunderstood, is general enough. In every place, in many a family, these victims of diseased sensibility are to be found, and they might find a weakening satisfaction in observing a parallel between their own feelings and those of Jesus. But before that parallel is assumed, be very sure that it is, as in His case, the elevation of your character which severs you from your species. The world has small sympathy for Divine goodness; but it also has little for a great many other qualities which are disagreeable to it. You meet with no response; you are passed by; find yourself unpopular; meet with little communion. Well! Is that because you are above the world,—nobler, devising and executing grand plans, which they cannot comprehend; vindicating the wronged; proclaiming and living on great principles; offending it by the saintliness of your purity, and the unworldliness of your aspirations? Then yours is the loneliness of Christ. Or is it that you are wrapped up in self,—cold, disobliging, sentimental, indifferent about the welfare of others, and very much astonished that they are not deeply interested in

you? *You* must not use these words of Christ. They have nothing to do with you.

Let us look at one or two of the occasions on which this loneliness was felt.

The first time was when He was but twelve years old, when His parents found Him in the temple, hearing the Doctors and asking them questions. High thoughts were in the Child's soul: expanding views of life; larger views of duty, and His own destiny.

There is a moment in every true life—to some it comes very early—when the old routine of duty is not large enough; when the parental roof seems too low, because the Infinite above is arching over the soul; when the old formulas, in creeds, catechisms, and articles, seem to be narrow, and they must either be thrown aside, or else transformed into living and breathing realities; when the earthly father's authority is being superseded by the claims of a Father in heaven.

That is a lonely, lonely moment, when the young soul first feels God—when this earth is recognised as an "awful place, yea, the very gate of heaven;" when the dream-ladder is seen planted against the skies, and we wake, and the dream haunts us as a sublime reality.

You may detect the approach of that moment in the young man or the young woman by the awakened spirit of inquiry; by a certain restlessness of look, and an eager earnestness of tone; by the devouring study of all kinds of books; by the waning of your own influence, while the inquirer is asking the truth of the Doctors and Teachers in the vast Temple of the world; by a certain opinionativeness, which is austere and disagreeable enough; but the austere moment of the fruit's taste is that in which it is passing from greenness into ripeness. If you wait in patience, the sour will become sweet. Rightly looked at, that opinionativeness is more truly anguish; the fearful solitude of

feeling the insecurity of all that is human; the discovery that life is real, and forms of social and religious existence hollow. The old moorings are torn away, and the soul is drifting, drifting, drifting, very often without compass, except the guidance of an unseen hand, into the vast infinite of God. Then come the lonely words, and no wonder, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

2. That solitude was felt by Christ in trial. In the desert, in Pilate's judgment-hall, in the garden, He was alone; and alone must every son of man meet his trial-hour. The individuality of the soul necessitates that. Each man is a new soul in this world: untried, with a boundless Possible before him. No one can predict what he may become, prescribe his duties, or mark out his obligations. Each man's own nature has its own peculiar rules; and he must take up his life-plan alone, and persevere in it in a perfect privacy with which no stranger intermeddleth. Each man's temptations are made up of a host of peculiarities, internal and external, which no other mind can measure. You are tried alone; alone you pass into the desert; alone you must bear and conquer in the Agony; alone you must be sifted by the world. There are moments known only to a man's own self, when he sits by the poisoned springs of existence, "yearning for a morrow which shall free him from the strife." And there are trials more terrible than that. Not when vicious inclinations are opposed to holy, but when virtue conflicts with virtue, is the real rending of the soul in twain. A temptation, in which the lower nature struggles for mastery, can be met by the whole united force of the spirit. But it is when obedience to a heavenly Father can be only paid by disobedience to an earthly one; or fidelity to duty can be only kept by infidelity to some entangling engagement; or the straight path must be taken over the misery of others; or the counsel of the affectionate

friend must be met with a "Get thee behind me, Satan:"—O! it is then, when human advice is unavailable, that the soul feels what it is to be alone.

Once more:—the Redeemer's soul was alone in dying. The hour had come,—they were all gone, and He was, as He predicted, left alone. All that is human drops from us in that hour. Human faces flit and fade, and the sounds of the world become confused. "I shall die alone,"—yes, and alone you live. The philosopher tells us that no atom in creation touches another atom,—they only approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible something repels,—they only *seem* to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points, and those chiefly external,—a fearful and a lonely thought, but one of the truest of life. Death only realizes that which has been fact all along. In the central deeps of our being we are alone.

## II. The spirit or temper of that solitude.

1. Observe its grandeur. I am alone, yet not alone. There is a feeble and sentimental way in which we speak of the Man of sorrows. We turn to the Cross, and the Agony, and the Loneliness, to touch the softer feelings—to arouse compassion. You degrade *that* loneliness by your compassion. Compassion! compassion for Him! Adore if you will,—respect and reverence that sublime solitariness with which none but the Father was,—but no pity; let it draw out the firmer and manlier graces of the soul. Even tender sympathy seems out of place.

For even in human things, the strength that is in a man can be only learnt when he is thrown upon his own resources and left alone. What a man can do in conjunction with others does not test the man. Tell us what he can do alone. It is one thing to defend the truth when you know that your audience are already prepossessed, and that every argument will meet a willing response; and it is another

thing to hold the truth when truth must be supported, if at all, alone,—met by cold looks and unsympathizing suspicion. It is one thing to rush on to danger with the shouts and the sympathy of numbers; it is another thing when the lonely chieftain of the sinking ship sees the last boat-full disengage itself, and folds his arms to go down into the majesty of darkness, crushed, but not subdued.

Such and greater far was the strength and majesty of the Saviour's solitariness. It was not the trial of the lonely hermit. There is a certain gentle and pleasing melancholy in the life which is lived alone. But there are the forms of nature to speak to him; and he has not the positive opposition of mankind, if he has the absence of actual sympathy. It is a solemn thing, doubtless, to be apart from men, and to feel eternity rushing by like an arrowy river. But the solitude of Christ was the solitude of a crowd. In that single Human bosom dwelt the Thought which was to be the germ of the world's life—a thought unshared, misunderstood, or rejected. Can you not feel the grandeur of those words, when the Man, reposing on His solitary strength, felt the last shadow of perfect isolation pass across His soul:—"My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?"

Next, learn from these words self-reliance. "Ye shall leave me alone." Alone, then, the Son of Man was content to be. He threw Himself on His own solitary thought: did not go down to meet the world; but waited, though it might be for ages, till the world should come round to Him. He appealed to the Future, did not aim at seeming consistent, left His contradictions unexplained:—I came from the Father,—I leave the world, and go to the Father. "Now," said they, "thou speakest no proverb:" that is, enigma. But many a hard and enigmatical saying before He had spoken, and He left them all. A thread runs through all true acts, stringing them together into one harmonious

chain: but it is not for the Son of God to be anxious to prove their consistency with each other.

This is self-reliance—to repose calmly on the thought which is deepest in our bosoms, and be unmoved if the world will not accept it yet. To live on your own convictions against the world, is to overcome the world—to believe that what is truest in you is true for all: to abide by that, and not be over-anxious to be heard or understood, or sympathized with, certain that at last all must acknowledge the same, and that, while you stand firm, the world will come round to you—that is independence. It is not difficult to get away into retirement, and there live upon your own convictions; nor is it difficult to mix with men, and follow their convictions; but to enter into the world, and there live out firmly and fearlessly according to your own conscience—that is Christian greatness.

There is a cowardice in this age which is not Christian. We shrink from the consequences of truth. We look round and cling dependently. We ask what men will think; what others will say; whether they will not stare in astonishment. Perhaps they will; but he who is calculating that will accomplish nothing in this life. The Father—the Father which is with us and in us—what does He think? God's work cannot be done without a spirit of independence. A man is got some way in the Christian life when he has learned to say humbly, and yet majestically, "I dare to be alone."

Lastly, remark the humility of this loneliness. Had the Son of Man simply said, I can be alone, He would have said no more than any proud, self-relying man can say; but when He added, "because the Father is with me," that independence assumed another character, and self-reliance became only another form of reliance upon God. Distinguish between genuine and spurious humility. There is a false humility which says, "It is my own poor thought, and

I must not trust it. I must distrust my own reason and judgment, because they are my own. I must not accept the dictates of my own conscience; for is it not my own, and is not trust in self the great fault of our fallen nature?"

Very well. Now, remember something else. There is a Spirit which beareth witness with our spirits; there is a God who "is not far from any one of us;" there is a "Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world." Do not be unnaturally humble. The thought of your own mind perchance is the Thought of God. To refuse to follow that may be to disown God. To take the judgment and conscience of other men to live by, where is the humility of that? From whence did their conscience and judgment come? Was the fountain from which they drew exhausted for you? If they refused like you to rely on their own conscience, and you rely upon it, how are you sure that it is more the Mind of God than your own which you have refused to hear?

Look at it in another way. The charm of the words of great men—those grand sayings which are recognised as true as soon as heard—is this, that you recognise them as wisdom which passed across your own mind. You feel that they are your own thoughts come back to you, else you would not at once admit them: "All that floated across me before, only I could not say it, and did not feel confident enough to assert it, or had not conviction enough to put into words." Yes, God spoke to you what He did to them: only they believed it, said it, trusted the Word within them, and you did not. Be sure that often when you say, "It is only my own, poor thought, and I am alone," the real correcting thought is this, "Alone, but the Father is with me,"—therefore I can live by that lonely conviction.

There is no danger in this, whatever timid minds may think—no danger of mistake, if the character be a true one. For we are not in uncertainty in this matter. It has been

given us to know our base from our noble hours: to distinguish between the voice which is from above, and that which speaks from below, out of the abyss of our animal and selfish nature. Samuel could distinguish between the impulse—quite a human one—which would have made him select Eliab out of Jesse's sons, and the deeper judgment by which "the *Lord* said, Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, for I have refused him." Doubtless deep truth of character is required for this: for the whispering voices get mixed together, and we dare not abide by our own thoughts, because we think them our own, and not God's: and this because we only now and then endeavor to know in earnest. It is only given to the habitually true to know the difference. He knew it, because all His blessed life long He could say, "My judgment is just, *because* I seek not my own will, but the will of Him which sent me."

The practical result and inference of all this is a very simple, but a very deep one: the deepest of existence. Let life be a life of faith. Do not go timorously about, inquiring what others think, and what others believe, and what others say. It seems the easiest, it is the most difficult thing in life to do this—believe in God. God is near you. Throw yourself fearlessly upon Him. Trembling mortal, there is an unknown might within your soul, which will wake when you command it. The day may come when all that is human—man and woman—will fall off from you, as they did from Him. Let His strength be yours. Be independent of them all now. The Father is with you. Look to Him, and He will save you.



## XVI.

### IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

HILL.

[Quaint ROWLAND HILL! honest, untiring in gospel zeal, yet abounding in an eccentric humor that either offended or conquered the hearts of all who heard him; in figure so noble and commanding, that, even when almost fourscore and ten, his congregation were used to say, "It does us good if we can only see him!" This founder of the noted Surrey Chapel, London, was the son of Sir R. Hill, and was born at Hawkstone, Shropshire, August 23d 1744. He graduated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and was ordained deacon in the Church of England. Yet he soon became a devoted and able disciple of Whitefield. For fifty winters he ministered to his great London congregation, and gave his summers to itinerant preaching, closing his labors only with his life, April 11th 1833. His "Village Dialogues," a defence of Christian doctrine in a series of attractive conversations, were widely popular. He lived a whole-souled evangelist. Sheridan said of him: "His ideas come red-hot from the heart." The following Sermon, reported as delivered, was preached in Surrey Chapel on his last New Year's Day on earth. It attests his devoutness and earnestness of spirit, despite the infirmities of his eighty-ninth year.]

*"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."—Exodus xii. 2.*

BRETHREN, time passes very quickly. We are now beginning a new year—which of us will be alive when the year is concluded? Many of my friends have been swept away by the scythe of time into eternity since this time twelve months; and there is one standing among you now who does not expect to see this year out. The days of my pilgrimage must be nearly ended. Dear brethren, do let me offer a few hints another time for your eternal good. I dread the thought of having the sun set, in my poor little way, in a manner that is inconsistent with former mercies.

Oh, it is beautiful to see the setting sun on a summer's day—though the rays are faint, yet they are still bright and clear. So while the rays of my poor abilities begin to get very feeble, God can still give a light to them—I pray that he may be a light and life to your souls.

Now, what have we here in the text? Why, that which may instruct us all. The words, perhaps, may not strike you as being very appropriate, but they will be a good starting-post for me, perhaps, and instruct me to speak profitably upon more things than one.

There is no good done to the souls of men, but as divine knowledge is communicated to our hearts through Him who is the fountain of all knowledge and all wisdom whatsoever. What is a man without an understanding? And what is that understanding, unless the Lord give light to the understanding? How beautiful is that prayer which you sometimes offer, that “the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.”

But we must not only have a door-way into the mind, by the medium of the understanding—but when we get into the mind, the great matter is, to bring God to you. Lord, grant that we may never come to the house of God without humbly waiting on God, in order that we may receive the food of his house. How miserably off is that man who calls at a house where is plenty of food, and where he is permitted to take what he pleases, and still prefers joining with them who are under the penalty of starvation! Oh, that the Lord would give me food for you; and oh, that the Lord would give you appetites to eat it!

The Lord was determined to take a people to himself, according to his own wisdom, and to bring them to the pro-

mised land, where he was to instruct them in things that were figurative for the day, having "a shadow of good things to come," (we have the happiness to enjoy these things more plainly) by different types, and ceremonies, and sacrifices. Now the day at length approaches when Israel is to be delivered, by the outstretched arm of Omnipotence itself, from the bonds of their Egyptian taskmasters and tyrants. The day approaches and the work must be done, because God determined it should be done. What a mercy it is that God's determinations must be accomplished! Let me know his will, let me ask to have that will engraven upon my heart; and, as sure as God is omnipotent, so shall I have that glorious will of his accomplished upon me for my everlasting good. I wish I could lift up my heart more abundantly to Him who is the author of omnipotent power, when I make use of that but one expression in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done." And, blessed be his name, what a glorious promise is that, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord:" I have given them minds, and I will feed and direct those minds for their good; and their minds shall be directed according to my holy mind and will. So that there shall be a happy communication between unworthy sinners that seek him, and God that gives them to understand.

Well, he gave the children of Israel divers ordinances; and the first grand institution God points out before us this morning, namely, that of the passover, the account of which we have in this chapter. We are certain that the Gospel was meant in all that institution, when we are told that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Not one drop of blood was ever shed from any of the animals that were sacrificed in ancient times, but all pointed beautifully to the dear Lamb of God who came into the world, and took away sin by the sacrifice of himself. All of them went to prefigure the glorious days when the fullness of the time shall

come, when all these typical representations shall be really and gloriously exemplified. I met with a person the other day who thought there could be no use in common people reading the account of the Levitical institutions; I trust you are all convinced that those institutions were the Gospel of the Old Testament dispensation, and were all typical of the Lamb of God, who was to come in the fullness of time—oh, it is a fine expression,—to “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Oh, thanks be to God for the redemption! My debts are all discharged! I love to represent Christ to you in the way of a substituted surety; he paid the debts for me. I remember once myself being a considerable sufferer by being a surety for a debtor. In such a case they come on you the same as if you had contracted the debt, though you did not contract a farthing of it. So the Lord comes on us to demand payment of the law; then the Lord Jesus, our beloved surety, comes in: “I have paid thy debts—I have suffered thy penalty—I died;” what a fine reason that is! “the just for the unjust, that I might bring you to God.” Oh, the latter part of the business is charming; we are to be brought to God through Jesus Christ, being renewed in the spirit of our minds.

Wherever redemption through Christ is not preached fully, and freely, and distinctively, to the hearts of men, we never find a blessing upon the preached word. How dare I come, with all my imperfections about me, to a God of infinite holiness and purity? But now, all my sins are buried in the grave of Christ. Yes, and I may look upon the glorious voice which revived the body of Christ, when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Father (as well as by his own power too, for he had “power to lay down his life,” and he had “power to take it again,”) as a proof of my resurrection to everlasting life. “He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.” And as a

sweet pledge of the certainty of my resurrection, what did he do for his people? He blessed them with a spiritual resurrection: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sins." The vivifying grace of Christ in the soul is an earnest of that second, glorious resurrection in Christ, when body and soul shall be reunited, when we shall see our Redeemer as he is, know as we are known, and "be for ever with the Lord."

Now, what was ordered to be done by the Israelites in this chapter? Why here we are told of the lamb that was to be slain, the paschal lamb in the time of the passover. It was the first of all the ordinances that God ordained in the Jewish church, it was to be with them the beginning of the year. My dear brethren, we never begin to live till we live to God. I remember once seeing an old man, I suppose he must have been seventy or eighty years of age; and I asked him how old he was. He looked at me—he was brought to me as a monument of mercy,—he looked at me for a time, and faltered in his voice, the tears trickling down his cheeks; says he, "I am two years old." "Two years old?" "Ah, sir," says he, "till a little time ago I lived the life of a dead man; and I never knew what life was till I met with the life which is 'hid with Christ in God.'" Oh, it is a glorious truth; we have a life in God. And we may further add, "When Christ" (that is a fine idea—God engrave it on my heart!) "When Christ, who is our life (that he is) shall appear, then shall we also"—Oh what miracles of mercy shall we be!—"then shall we also appear with him in glory."

There is a number of fine mysteries connected with this lamb's being offered. It was to be the night of their deliverance: then began their day of happiness and deliverance: and there were ceremonies appointed which are very significant to us in this present day. They were to eat the paschal lamb with their staff in their hand, with their shoes

on their feet, and with their loins girded. God give us the staff of promise, with which we may fight our enemies. Nothing in the world repels the enemy's temptations so well as when we can fasten on a good promise, and set it against the devil's malice against our precious souls.

They were to have their shoes on their feet, so that they might be ready to march immediately. God be praised, Christians are not to have one single idle hour. Be always ready, morning, noon, and night; that, if you are awakened out of your sleep by the coming of the Lord, you may be ready to say, "Here I am, Lord, prepared to meet you." May sloth be gone, and may we be filled with that activity and sacred zeal which shall bring us safe through all our labors.

They were also to have their "loins girded." We are told of the girdle of truth—of the loins being "girt about with truth." I have seen poor men when at hard labor with a girdle about their loins by way of strengthening them. "Gird up the loins of your mind," says the apostle; "be sober, and hope to the end." Be always ready for the work whenever you may be called to it. Oh, this is a good word for any part of our sermon—as it is good for the beginning of our life, so it will be while we continue and go on with our days. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"—can any one of you get beyond the lovely practice of that one thing?—"forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Hence it is that we are beautifully instructed to understand religion to be a persevering work: "So run that ye may obtain." What a mercy it is when we are kept watching and praying that we enter not into temptation!

I thank God the Bible is a very practical book. Though I know there are a great number of things beyond my own power of obtaining them, yet the promises are brought

sweetly to my mind when I go to Him for strength who alone gives it me to perform duties. Oh, those beautiful expressions of the Apostle Paul!—I fear not the language of the commandment when the language of the promise is so rich and free.—“Work out your own salvation.” Who can do it for you? I pray God he may help you; but if you don’t help yourselves it will be in vain. I don’t doubt this will sound a little comical in the ears of some. God helps them who help themselves: God gives strength to work, and man works by the strength which God gives him. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;” and then directly I have the promise, and a glorious promise it is. If ten thousand angels had put all their strength together, they could not have given me a promise of equal value. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you”—he that gives strength to all his bright seraphs above will give you strength—“to will and to do of his good pleasure.” He gives a will by the breath of omnipotence, and then we see the activity of real Christians when the activity of God is in them, when the Spirit of the Lord is said to work in them mightily, when they are “strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man.” Dear brethren, I wish to have stronger faith in these strong promises of God. Indeed they are large promises, such as nobody could ever have dared to expect if he had not enabled believers to perform the same by the power of his mighty Spirit. I want no other evidence of the truth of these things, my dear brethren, than the life and conversation of you that truly believe in the Lord Jesus, you who, by your walk and behavior, are lights to the world. See what grace does when it reigns in the heart, and how you become more than conquerors over all your corruptions.

There was not only to be the staff of profession in their hand, and their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel

of peace; but they were to be ready to march immediately the Lord sent them out to work. Here it is to be further observed, that directly the commandment was given, they were said to obey it; they had no time to hesitate, and there was no time to lose: their loins were girt, their staff was in their hands, and they were ready to go.

They were to suffer no leaven to be in their houses at the time they celebrated the passover. You know what leaven means; the leaven of malice and wickedness, the swelling pride of the human heart, and the abominable evils that are produced thereby. No unclean thing was to be eaten by them: not that any outward uncleanness will make us inwardly unclean: thanks be to God that he has ordered it that that which was the duty of the Jews is no longer our duty. But at the same time I thank my God for that charming command—there is no command but, if we obey it, will be charming,—“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” No unclean thing was to be touched or eaten by the Jews of old. We should so hate sin that we will not touch it. Who in the world would like to touch a filthy carcass if he could keep away from it?

These are some of the particulars connected with the manner in which the Jews were commanded to eat the passover. There are other things respecting it, on which we may observe. It was to be a lamb of the first year. Christ died in the beginning of the prime of his life. Christ suffered himself to be bound by the law's curse; he received the curse “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” What a day was that when all the sins of God's people were laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ! Sometimes we sing,

“The Lord, in the day  
Of his anger, did lay  
Our sins on the Lamb, and he bore them away.”



He bore them away into the land of eternal forgetfulness. "Thy sins and thy iniquities," said the God of love, "will I remember no more." Now and then you and I have a person who has offended us; and we find that if they repent we can forgive them through the grace of God, when all that is angry and bad is subdued by the contrary spirit: but we cannot say—I cannot, at least, and I dare say you cannot, that we entirely forget it; to say that we remember no more, is more than we can do. Now, God's promise is, even to forget our sins; he will bury them in the grave of Christ, and they are never to appear any more against us.

It should be, moreover, further observed, that this lamb that was to be slain, when slaughtered was not to be divided. God give me an undivided good. There are some people talk about the atonement of Christ, and don't like to talk about the influence of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and purify the heart. If I preach one sermon on justification, I would at least preach another on sanctification. If I tell people how God has freely forgiven them, so I will tell them of his grace working righteousness in the heart; it has wrought out not only righteousness for me, but it works righteousness in me, and makes me righteous. Don't let us forget that fine doctrine. He is just as willing to give his grace for the purifying our hearts, as he was free to give us of his blood for the justification of our persons. If ever we preach the gospel in a sort of partial manner, without giving equal weight to both parts of divine truth, we do injury to the souls of men. There is not an hour in my life in which I need not view "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." I cannot spend a single day upon the earth, but I am compelled to cry out,

"Open, O Lord, for this day's sins,  
The fountain of thy blood."

But still I want his Holy Spirit, that I may sin less, love him more, obey and serve him better, and live more to his

glory and praise. Don't be partial in your believing: remember that all the doctrines are equally valuable. Not a bone of this sacrifice was ever to be broken; it was to be eaten whole. So may you and I fix on the Lamb of God as one complete and whole salvation without dividing part from part. I remember a very pretty remark a child made, when asked a rather improper question: "Which do you love best, your father or your mother?" The poor little child did not know what to answer: for a while, he did not know what to answer: he looked first at one, and then at the other; and at last the poor little creature cried out, "I love them both best." So I would have you love justification by the blood of Christ, to feel his holy righteousness which he has given you, equally with his sanctification whereby you are able to live to God. If I have been convinced by the power of the Holy Ghost, sin will be my plague and grief all the days of my life. If God himself were to tell me to be happy without being holy, I could not be so: it would be impossible to be content with pardon without purification, and being among the blessed number of those who are "pure in heart." I never wish you to have the consolations of religion without having the sanctifying influences of it, and without finding that your happiness is increased as your holiness is increased. You need not be afraid, according to the cant of some bad professors, of being legal; for the more holy you are, the more you will feel yourselves indebted to Him who has made you holy; and the more you will acknowledge your obligations to that God who has carried on his work of grace with power in your souls, and who has promised never to leave you till he brings you to his everlasting glory.

Then we find how the lamb was to be eaten. It was to be eaten by families, and to be "roast with fire." Oh, my God, what did our Redeemer feel, when, if I may so express myself, resting under his Father's wrath, he cried out

in the agonies of his soul, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" and when "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." I do like that prayer; "By thine agony and bloody sweat, Good Lord deliver us." O that I may learn to be crucified with Christ! O that I may learn to have all my sins mortified through his mortification, and live to his glory and his praise.

This great work was to be done for and in the children of Israel, and it was done for them; and it will be wrought in all them that believe in the Lord Jesus. Pray, my dear brethren, what is life? It is a wonderful emanation from God himself. Why is it I have not the life of a beast? I don't know but what human life is of the same nature, in regard to the mere point of life, as is the life of any other animal: but there is a glorious difference in this respect; it is a life which is filled with mind, and in that life I can climb to God himself. And when the Lord is pleased to vivify my dead soul, to reanimate me from the grave of sin, to make me "a new creature in Christ Jesus," to give me a new nature; when all these pretty texts are brought home to the heart, and I know their meaning by feeling their power, then I know that my life is worth a thousand worlds. It is "hid with Christ in God." Christ is my life in time, and he will permit me to be with him in the mansions of eternity. Oh what a mercy it is to feel that we have a present life, a spiritual life, in order that we may rise to live with God for ever. "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "I live," saith the apostle, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God." Dear brethren, is it not a happiness to have all these powers communicated to us, through the gospel of our Redeemer, whereby we may live to his praise, and be for ever with the Lord?

But there is one thing which must not be forgotten. This Lamb that was to be slain was to have its blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the house, and on the lintel; but not upon the threshold. We are not to trample on the blood of Christ; but we are to look at it as a security from that death and condemnation which we as sinners deserve before God. When the destroying angel came to a house, and saw the blood sprinkled there, not an Israelite's child was to be smitten; while the children of the Egyptians were sure to lose their offspring as an instance of the vengeance of God.

Now, my dear brethren, do pray the Lord to make this part of the sermon profitable. Do remember that, precious as the blood of the Lamb is, it never will secure you, unless it be sprinkled on the door-posts of your heart; it never will avail unless applied. That is the grand work of faith: faith not only believes that Christ died for sinners, but faith goes more particularly to the application of it to the mind. I may hear of a rich man who has paid the debts of many people; but unless he has paid mine, his generosity to others is of no value to me. I want to know that all my debts are pardoned, and to have the certainty of it by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit possessing my soul.

May the Lord bless these imperfect hints, for his name's sake. Amen.

## XVII.

### WRATH UPON THE WICKED TO THE UTTERMOST.

EDWARDS.

[“I consider JONATHAN EDWARDS the greatest of the sons of men. He ranks with the brightest luminaries of the Christian Church, not excluding any country or any age since the apostolic:”—such is the tribute paid by the eminent Robert Hall to one of America’s ablest divines and metaphysicians. Jonathan Edwards was born October 5th 1703, at Windsor, Connecticut, where his father ministered for sixty years. As a child, he was a scholar and logician. He graduated from Yale College at seventeen, was licensed to preach two years later, and in 1727 was installed in the Congregational Church, Northampton. His pastorate of twenty-four years, at first blessed by a thrilling revival of religion, ended in his expulsion by his congregation. His offences were too faithful rebukes of the sins of his people, and the exclusion of sinners from the Lord’s Supper. Six years of his life were now given to miserably paid missionary labors among the Indians at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. These were made memorable by the writing of his “Freedom of the Will,” at least the peer of his “Religious Affections.” He was rewarded by the presidency of Princeton College, but died a few months after of small-pox, March 22d 1758. His last words were: “Trust in God, and ye need not fear.” His most powerful Sermons appeal to the conscience by the terrors of condemnation awaiting the unregenerate.]

*“To fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”—1 Thess. ii. 16.*

In verse 14 the apostle commends the Christian Thessalonians that they became the followers of the churches of God in Judea, both in faith and in sufferings; in *faith*, in that they received the word, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God: in *sufferings*, in that they had suffered like things of their own countrymen, as *they* had of the Jews. Upon which the apostle sets forth the persecuting,

cruel, and perverse wickedness of that people, "who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have," says he, "persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved." Then come in the words of the text; "To fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the utmost."

In these words we may observe two things:

1. To what effect was the heinous wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews, viz. *to fill up their sins*. God hath set bounds to every man's wickedness; he suffers men to live, and to go on in sin, till they have filled up their measure, and then cuts them off. To this effect was the wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews: they were exceedingly wicked, and thereby filled up the measure of their sins a great pace. And the reason why they were permitted to be so obstinate under the preaching and miracles of Christ, and of the apostles, and under all the means used with them, was that they might fill up the measure of their sins. This is agreeable to what Christ said, Matt. xxiii. 31, 32. "Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers."

2. The punishment of their wickedness: "The wrath is come upon them to the utmost." There is a connection between the measure of men's sin, and the measure of punishment. When they have filled up the measure of their sin, then is filled up the measure of God's wrath.

The degree of their punishment, is the *utmost* degree. This may respect both a national and personal punishment. If we take it as a *national* punishment, a little after the time when the epistle was written, wrath came upon the nation of the Jews to the utmost, in their terrible destruction by the Romans; when, as Christ said, "was great tribulation, such as never was since the beginning of the world to that time," Matt. xxiv. 21. That nation had before

suffered many of the fruits of divine wrath for their sins ; but this was beyond all, this was their highest degree of punishment as a nation. If we take it as a *personal* punishment, then it respects their punishment in hell. God often punishes men very dreadfully in this world ; but in hell “wrath comes on them to the *uttermost*.” By this expression is also denoted the *certainty* of this punishment. For though the punishment was then future, yet it is spoken of as present : “The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” It was as certain as if it had already taken place. God, who knows all things, speaks of things that are not as though they were ; for things present and things future are equally certain with him. It also denotes the *near approach* of it. *The wrath is come* ; i. e. it is just at hand ; it is at the door ; as it proved with respect to that nation ; their terrible destruction by the Romans was soon after the apostle wrote this epistle.

DOCTRINE. When those that continue in sin shall have filled up the measure of their sin, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost.

I. There is a *certain measure* that God hath set to the sin of every wicked man. God says concerning the sin of man, as he says to the raging waves of the sea, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. The measure of some is much greater than of others. Some reprobates commit but a little sin in comparison with others, and so are to endure proportionably a smaller punishment. There are many vessels of wrath ; but some are smaller, and others greater vessels ; some will contain comparatively but little wrath, others a greater measure of it. Sometimes, when we see men go to dreadful lengths, and become very heinously wicked, we are ready to wonder that God lets them alone. He sees them go on in such audacious wickedness, and keeps silence, nor does anything to interrupt them, but they go smoothly on, and meet with no hurt. But sometimes the

reason why God lets them alone is, because they have not filled up the measure of their sins. When they live in dreadful wickedness, they are but filling up the measure which God hath *limited* for them. This is sometimes the reason why God suffers very wicked men to live so long; because their iniquity is not full: Gen. xv. 16. "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." For this reason also God sometimes suffers them to live in prosperity. Their prosperity is a snare to them, and an occasion of their sinning a great deal more. Wherefore God suffers them to have such a snare, because he suffers them to fill up a larger measure. So, for this cause, he sometimes suffers them to live under great light, and great means and advantages, at the same time to neglect and misimprove all. Every one shall live till he hath filled up his measure.

II. While men continue in sin, they are filling the measure set them. This is the work in which they spend their whole lives; they begin in their childhood; and, if they live to grow old in sin, they still go on with this work. It is the work with which every day is filled up. They may alter their business in other respects; they may sometimes be about one thing, and sometimes about another; but they never change from this work of filling up the measure of their sins. Whatever they put their hands to, they are still employed in this work. This is the first thing that they set themselves about when they awake in the morning, and the last thing they do at night. They are all the while treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. It is a gross mistake of some natural men, who think that when they read and pray, they do not add to their sins; but, on the contrary, think they diminish their guilt by these exercises. They think, that instead of adding to their sins, they do something to satisfy for their past offences; but, instead of that, they



do but add to the measure by their best prayers, and by those services with which they themselves are most pleased.

III. When once the measure of their sins is filled up, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost. God will then wait no longer upon them. Wicked men think that God is altogether such an one as themselves, because, when they commit such wickedness, he keeps silence. "Because judgment against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the children of men is fully set in them to do evil." But when once they shall have filled up the measure of their sins, judgment will be executed; God will not bear with them any longer. Now is the day of grace, and the day of patience, which they spend in filling up their sins; but when their sins shall be full, then will come the day of wrath, the day of the fierce anger of God.—God often executes his wrath on ungodly men in a less degree, in this world. He sometimes brings afflictions upon them, and that in wrath. Sometimes he expresses his wrath in very sore judgments; sometimes he appears in a terrible manner, not only outwardly, but also in the inward expressions of it on their consciences. Some, before they died, have had the wrath of God inflicted on their souls in degrees that have been intolerable. But these things are only forerunners of their punishment, only slight foretastes of wrath. God never stirs up all his wrath against wicked men while in this world; but when once wicked men shall have filled up the measure of their sins, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost; and that in the following respects:

1. Wrath will come upon them without any *restraint* or moderation in the degree of it. God doth always lay, as it were, a restraint upon himself; he doth not stir up his wrath; he stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind; he lets not his arm light down on wicked men with its full weight. But when sinners shall have filled up the measure of their sins, there will be no caution, no restraint. His

rough wind will not be stayed nor moderated. The wrath of God will be poured out like fire. He will come forth, not only in anger, but in the fierceness of his anger; he will execute wrath with power, so as to show what his wrath is, and make his power known. There will be nothing to alleviate his wrath; his heavy wrath will lie on them, without anything to lighten the burthen, or to keep off, in any measure, the full weight of it from pressing the soul. His eye will not spare, neither will he regard the sinner's cries and lamentations, however loud and bitter. Then shall wicked men know that God is the Lord; they shall know how great that majesty is which they have despised, and how dreadful that threatened wrath is which they have so little regarded. Then shall come on wicked men that punishment which they deserve. God will exact of them the uttermost farthing. Their iniquities are marked before him; they are all written in his book; and in the future world he will reckon with them, and they must pay all the debt. Their sins are laid up in store with God; they are sealed up among his treasures; and them he will recompense, even recompense into their bosoms. The consummate degree of punishment will not be executed till the day of judgment; but the wicked are sealed over to this consummate punishment immediately after death; they are cast into hell, and there bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day; and they know that the highest degree of punishment is coming upon them. Final wrath will be executed without any mixture; all mercy, all enjoyments will be taken away. God sometimes expresses his wrath in this world; but here good things and evil are mixed together; in the future there will be only evil things.

2. Wrath will then be executed without any *merciful* circumstances. The judgments which God executes on ungodly men in this world, are attended with many merciful circumstances. There is much patience and long-suffering,

together with judgment; judgments are joined with continuance of opportunity to seek mercy. But in hell there will be no more exercises of divine patience. The judgments which God exercises on ungodly men in this world are warnings to them to avoid greater punishments; but the wrath which will come upon them, when they shall have filled up the measure of their sin, will not be of the nature of warnings. Indeed they will be effectually awakened, and made thoroughly sensible, by what they shall suffer; yet their being awakened and made sensible will do them no good. Many a wicked man hath suffered very awful things from God in this world, which have been a means of saving good; but that wrath which sinners shall suffer after death will be no way for their good. God will have no merciful design in it; neither will it be possible that they should get any good by that or by anything else.

3. Wrath will so be executed as to perfect the work to which wrath tends, viz., *utterly to undo* the subject of it. Wrath is often so executed in this life as greatly to distress persons, and bring them into great calamity; yet not so as to complete the ruin of those who suffer it; but in another world it will be so executed as to finish their destruction, and render them utterly and perfectly undone; it will take away all comfort, all hope, and all support. The soul will be, as it were, utterly crushed; the wrath will be wholly intolerable. It must sink, and will utterly sink, and will have no more strength to keep itself from sinking than a worm would have to keep itself from being crushed under the weight of a mountain. The wrath will be so great, so mighty and powerful, as wholly to abolish all manner of welfare: Matt. xxi. 44. "But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

4. When persons shall have filled up the measure of their sin, that wrath will come upon them which is *eternal*. Though men may suffer very terrible and awful judgments

in this world, yet those judgments have an end. They may be long continued, yet they commonly admit of relief. Temporal distresses and sorrows have intermissions and respite, and commonly by degrees abate and wear off; but the wrath that shall be executed, when the measure of sin shall have been filled up, will have no end. Thus it will be to the uttermost as to its duration; it will be of so long continuance that it will be impossible it should be longer. Nothing can be longer than eternity.

5. When persons shall have filled up the measure of their sin, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost of what is *threatened*. Sin is an infinite evil; and the punishment which God hath threatened against it is very dreadful. The threatenings of God against the workers of iniquity are very awful; but these threatenings are never fully accomplished in this world. However dreadful things some men may suffer in this life, yet God never fully executes his threatenings for so much as one sin, till they have filled up the whole measure. The threatenings of the law are never answered by anything that any man suffers here. The most awful judgment in this life doth not answer God's threatenings, either in degree, or in circumstances, or in duration. If the greatest sufferings that ever are endured in this life should be eternal, it would not answer the threatening. Indeed temporal judgments *belong* to the threatenings of the law; but these are not *answered* by them; they are but foretastes of the punishment. "The wages of sin is death." No expressions of wrath that are suffered before men have filled up the measure of their sin, are its full wages. But *then* God will reckon with them, and will recompense into their bosoms the full deserved sum.

The use I would make of this doctrine is, of warning to natural men to rest no longer in sin, and to make haste to flee from it. The things which have been said, under this

doctrine, may well be awakening, awful considerations to you. It is awful to consider whose wrath it is that abides upon you, and of what wrath you are in danger. It is impossible to express the misery of a natural condition. It is like being in Sodom, with a dreadful storm of fire and brimstone hanging over it, just ready to break forth, and to be poured down upon it. The clouds of divine vengeance are full and just ready to burst. Here let those who yet continue in sin, in this town, consider particularly:

1. Under what *great means* and advantages you continue in sin. God is now favoring us with very great and extraordinary means and advantages, in that we have such extraordinary tokens of the presence of God among us; his spirit is so remarkably poured out, and multitudes of all ages and all sorts are converted and brought home to Christ. God appears among us in the most extraordinary manner, perhaps, that ever he did in New England. The children of Israel saw many mighty works of God when he brought them out of Egypt; but we, at this day, see works more mighty, and of a more glorious nature.

We, who live under such light, have had loud calls; but now, above all. Now is a day of salvation. The fountain hath been set open among us in an extraordinary manner, and hath stood open for a considerable time: Yet you continue in sin, and the calls that you have hitherto had, have not brought you to be washed in it. What extraordinary advantages have you lately enjoyed, to stir you up! How hath everything in the town, of late, been of that tendency! Those things which used to be the greatest hindrances have been removed. You have not the ill examples of immoral persons to be a temptation to you. There is not now that vain worldly talk and ill company to divert you, and to be a hindrance to you, which there used to be. Now you have multitudes of good examples set before you; there are many now all around you who, instead of diverting and

hindering you, are earnestly desirous of your salvation, and willing to do all that they can to move you to flee to Christ: they have a thirsting desire for it. The chief talk in the town has of late been about the things of religion, and has been such as hath tended to promote, and not to hinder, your souls' good. Everything all around you hath tended to stir you up; and will you yet continue in sin!

Some of you have continued in sin till you are far advanced in life. You were warned when you were children; and some of you had awakenings then; however, the time went away. You became men and women; and then you were stirred up again, you had the strivings of God's Spirit; and some of you have fixed the times when you would make thorough work of seeking salvation. Some of you perhaps determined to do it when you should be married and settled in the world; others when you should have finished such a business, and when your circumstances should be so and so altered. Now these times have come and are past, yet you continue in sin.

Many of you have had remarkable warnings of Providence. Some of you have been warned by the deaths of near *relations*; you have stood by and seen others die and go into eternity; yet this hath not been effectual. Some of you have been near death *yourselves*, have been brought nigh the grave in sore sickness, and were full of your promises how you would behave yourselves, if it should please God to spare your lives. Some of you have very narrowly escaped death by dangerous accidents; but God was pleased to spare you, to give you a further space to repent; yet you continue in sin.

Some of you have seen times of remarkable outpourings of the Spirit of God in this town in times past; but it had no good effect on you. *You* had the strivings of the Spirit of God too, as well as others. God did not pass so by your door, but that he came and knocked; yet you stood it out.

Now God hath come again in a more remarkable manner than ever before, and hath been pouring out his Spirit for some months in its most gracious influence: yet you remain in sin until now. In the beginning of this awakening you were warned to flee from wrath, and to forsake your sins. You were told what a wide door there was open, what an accepted time it was, and were urged to press into the kingdom of God. And many did press in; they forsook their sins, and believed in Christ; *but you, when you had seen it, repented not that you might believe him.*

Then you were warned again, and still others have been pressing and thronging into the kingdom of God. Many have fled for refuge and have laid hold on Christ: yet you continue in sin and unbelief. You have seen multitudes of all sorts, of all ages, young and old, flocking to Christ, and many of about your age and your circumstances; but you still are in the same miserable condition in which you used to be. You have seen persons daily flocking to Christ, as doves to their windows. God hath not only poured out his Spirit on this town, but also on other towns around us, and they are flocking in there as well as here. This blessing spreads further and further; many, far and near, seem to be setting their faces Zion-ward: yet you who live here, where this work first began, continue behind still; you have no lot nor portion in this matter.

2. How *dreadful* the wrath of God is, when it is executed to the uttermost. To make you in some measure sensible of that, I desire you to consider whose wrath it is. The wrath of a king is the roaring of a lion; but this is the wrath of Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent. Let us consider, what can we rationally think of it? How dreadful must be the wrath of such a Being, when it comes upon a person to the uttermost, without any pity, or moderation, or merciful circumstances! What must be the uttermost of his wrath, who made heaven and earth by the word of his

power; who spake, and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast! What must his wrath be, who commandeth the sun, and it rises not, and scaleth up the stars! What must his wrath be, who shaketh the earth out of its place, and causeth the pillars of heaven to tremble! What must his wrath be, who rebuketh the sea and maketh it dry, who removeth the mountains out of their places, and overturneth them in his anger? What must his wrath be, whose majesty is so awful that no man could live in the sight of it? What must the wrath of such a Being be, when it comes to the uttermost, when he makes his majesty appear and shine bright in the misery of wicked men? And what is a worm of the dust before the fury and under the weight of this wrath, which the stoutest devils cannot bear, but utterly sink and are crushed under it? Consider how dreadful the wrath of God is sometimes in this world, only in a little taste or view of it. Sometimes when God only enlightens conscience to have some sense of his wrath, it causes the stout-hearted to cry out; nature is ready to sink under it, when indeed it is but a little glimpse of divine wrath that is seen. This hath been observed in many cases. But if a slight taste and apprehension of wrath be so dreadful and intolerable, what must it be when it comes upon persons to the uttermost? When a few drops or a little sprinkling of wrath is so distressing and overbearing to the soul, how must it be when God opens the flood-gates and lets the mighty deluge of his wrath come pouring down upon men's guilty heads, and brings in all his waves and billows upon their souls? How little of God's wrath will sink them! Psalm ii. 12. "When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

3. Consider, you know not what wrath God may be about to execute upon wicked men in *this world*. Wrath may, in some sense, be coming upon them in the present life, to the uttermost, for aught we know. When it is said of the Jews,



"the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost," respect is had, not only to the execution of divine wrath on that people in hell, but that terrible destruction of Judea and Jerusalem, which was then near approaching, by the Romans. We know not but the wrath is now coming, in some peculiarly awful manner, on the wicked world. God seems, by the things which he is doing among us, to be coming forth for some great thing. The work which hath been lately wrought among us is no ordinary thing. He doth not work in his usual way, but in a way very extraordinary; and it is probable that it is a forerunner of some very great revolution. We must not pretend to say what is in the womb of Providence, or what is in the book of God's secret decrees; yet we may and ought to discern the signs of these times.

Though God be now about to do glorious things for his church and people, yet it is probable that they will be accompanied with dreadful things to his enemies. It is the manner of God, when he brings about any glorious revolution for his people, at the same time to execute very awful judgments on his enemies: Deut. xxxii. 43. "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land and to his people." Isa. iii. 10, 11. "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isa. lxx. 13, 14. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit." We find in Scripture that where glorious times are prophesied to God's people, there are at

the same time awful judgments foretold to his enemies. What God is now about to do, we know not: but this we may know, that there will be no safety to any but those who are in the ark.—Therefore it behoves all to haste and flee for their lives, to get into a safe condition, to get into Christ; then they need not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof: for God will be their refuge and strength; they need not be afraid of evil tidings; their hearts may be fixed, trusting in the Lord.

## XVIII.

### FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS (CONQUERING.

CHRYSOSTOM.

[JOHN, surnamed CHRYSOSTOM—golden-mouthed—from the rare beauty of his eloquence, was born at Antioch, A.D. 347. He was well taught in rhetoric and philosophy, while his Christian mother led him early to Christ. He began preaching at the age of thirty-four, and was made Bishop of Constantinople in 397. In that dissolute age he knew the truth, dared proclaim it fully as the ambassador of God, and spake it with exquisite grace. His attempted reformation of abuses excited enmity, and led to repeated banishments. His theology was peculiarly spiritual and ethical. In spirit he much resembled the Apostle John, as Augustine did Paul. He died in banishment in Pontus, 407. His favorite expression, and the last he uttered, was: "God be praised for everything!" Gentleness, godliness, and lips afire with heavenly zeal, give Chrysostom the first rank as a preacher of Christ Jesus. His Homilies on the New Testament and the Psalms are his chief works. The following, taken from the "Library of the Fathers," was probably delivered at Antioch.]

*"For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?"—1 Cor. i. 18-20.*

✓ To the sick and broken-spirited even wholesome meats are unpleasant, friends and relations burdensome; who are oftentimes not even recognised, but are rather accounted intruders. Much like this often is the case of those who are perishing in their souls. For the things which tend to salvation they know not; and those who are careful about them they consider to be troublesome. Now this ensues not from the nature of the thing, but from their disease. And just what the insane do, hating those who take care of

them, and ever after reviling them, the same is the case with unbelievers also. But as in the case of the former, they who are insulted then more than ever compassionate them, and weep, taking this as the worst symptom of the disease in its intense form, when they know not their best friends; so also in the case of the Gentiles let us act; yea more than for our wives let us wail over them, because they know not the common salvation. For not so dearly ought a man to love his wife as we should love all mankind, and draw them over unto salvation; be a man a Gentile, or be he what he may. For these then let us weep; for "the preaching of the Cross is to them foolishness," being itself Wisdom and Power. "For," saith he, "the preaching of the Cross to them that perish is foolishness."

For since it was likely that they, the Cross being derided by the Greeks, would resist and contend by aid of that wisdom, which came (forsooth) of themselves, as being disturbed by the expressions of the Greeks; Paul comforting them saith, Think it not strange and unaccountable, which is taking place. This is the nature of that which we now treat of, to have them that perish fail in acknowledging its power. For they are beside themselves, and behave as madmen; and so they rail and are disgusted at the medicines which bring health.

But what sayest thou, O man? Christ became a slave for thee, "having taken the form of a slave," and was crucified, and rose again. And when thou oughtest to adore Him risen for this and admire His loving-kindness; because what neither father, nor friend, nor son, did for thee, all this the Lord wrought, for thee, the enemy and offender—when, I say, thou oughtest to admire Him for these things, callest thou that foolishness, which is full of so great wisdom? Well, it is nothing wonderful; for it is a mark of them that perish not to recognise the things which lead to salvation. Be not troubled therefore, for it is no strange

nor unaccountable event, that things truly great are mocked at by those who are beside themselves. Now such as are in this mind you cannot convince by human wisdom. Yea, if you want so to convince them, you do but the contrary. For the things which transcend reasoning require faith alone. Thus, should we set about convincing men by reasonings, how God became man, and entered into the Virgin's womb, and not commit the matter unto faith, they will but deride the more. Therefore they who inquire-by reasonings, these are they who perish.

And why speak I of God? for in regard of created things, should we do this, great derision will ensue. For suppose a man, wishing to make out all things by reasoning; and let him try by thy discourse to convince himself how we see the light; and do thou try to convince him by reasoning. Nay, thou canst not: for if thou sayest that it suffices to see by opening the eyes, thou hast not expressed the manner, but the fact. For "why see we not," one will say, "by our hearing, and with our eyes hear? And why hear we not with the nostril, and with the hearing smell?" If then, he being in doubt about these things, and we unable to give the explanation of them, he is to begin laughing, shall not we rather laugh him to scorn? "For since both have their origin from one brain, since the two members are near neighbors to each other, why can they not do the same work?" Now we shall not be able to state the cause, nor the method of the unspeakable and curious operation; and should we make the attempt, we shall be laughed to-scorn. Wherefore, leaving this unto God's power and boundless wisdom, let us be silent.

Just so with regard to the things of God; should we desire to explain them by the wisdom which is from without, great derision will ensue, not from their infirmity, but from the folly of men. For the great things of all no language can explain.

~~N~~ow observe: when I say, "He was crucified;" the Greek saith, "And how can this be reasonable? Himself He helped not when undergoing crucifixion and sore trial at the moment of the Cross: how then after these things did He rise again and help others? For if He had been able, before death was the proper time." (For this the Jews actually said.) "But He who helped not himself, how helped He others? There is no reason in it," saith he. True, O man, for indeed it is above reason; and unspeakable is the power of the Cross. 'For that being actually in the midst of horrors, He should have shown Himself above all horrors; and being in the enemy's hold should have overcome; this cometh of Infinite Power. For as in the case of the Three Children, their not entering the furnace would not have been so astonishing, as that having entered in they trampled upon the fire;—and in the case of Jonah, it was a greater thing by far, after he had been swallowed by the fish, to suffer no harm from the monster, than if he had not been swallowed at all;—so also in regard of Christ; His not dying would not have been so inconceivable, as that being dead He should loose the bands of death. Say not then, "why did He not help Himself on the Cross?" for He was hastening on to close conflict with death himself. He descended not from the Cross, not because He could not, but because He would not. For Him whom the tyranny of death restrained not, how could the nails of the Cross restrain?

But these things, though known to us, are not so as yet to the unbelievers. Wherefore he said, that "the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent will I bring to nothing." Nothing from himself which might give offence, does he advance up to this point; but first he comes to the testimony of the Scrip-

ture, and then, furnished with boldness from thence, adopts more vehement words and saith,

Ver. 20, 21. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Where is the wise? Where the Scribe? Where the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, by the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." Having said, "It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," he subjoins the demonstration from facts, saying, "Where is the wise? where the Scribe?" at the same time glancing at both Gentiles and Jews. For what sort of philosopher, which among those who have studied logic, which of those knowing in Jewish matters, hath saved us, and made known the truth? Not one. It was the Fishermen's work, the whole of it.

Having then inferred what he had in view, and brought down their pride, and said, "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" he states the reason also, why these things were so done. "For after that by the wisdom of God," saith he, "the world by wisdom knew not God," the Cross appeared. Now what means, "by the wisdom of God?" The wisdom apparent in those works, whereby it was His will to make Himself known. For to this end did He frame them, and frame them such as they are, that by a sort of proportion, from the things which are seen, admiration of the Maker might be learned. Is the heaven great, and the earth boundless? Wonder then at Him who made them. For this heaven, great as it is, not only was made by Him, but made with ease; and that boundless earth too, was brought into being even as if it had been nothing. Wherefore of the former He saith, "The works of Thy fingers are the heavens;" and concerning the earth, "Who hath made the earth as it were nothing." Since then by this wisdom the world was unwilling to acknowledge God,

He employed what seemed to be foolishness, i. e. the Gospel, to persuade men; not by reasonings, but by faith. It remains that where God's wisdom is, there is no longer need of man's. For before, to infer that He who made the world, such and so great, must in all reason be a God possessed of a certain uncontrollable, unspeakable power; and by these means to apprehend Him;—this was the part of human wisdom. But now we need no more reasonings, but faith alone. For to believe on Him that was crucified and buried, and to be most fully persuaded that this person Himself both rose again, and sat down on high; this needeth not wisdom, nor reasonings, but faith. For the Apostles themselves came in not by wisdom, but by faith, and surpassed the heathen wise men in wisdom and loftiness, and that so much the more, by how much to raise disputings is less than to receive by faith the things of God. For this transcends all human understanding.

But how hath He “destroyed wisdom?” Being made known to us by Paul and others like him, He hath shown it to be unprofitable. For towards receiving the evangelical proclamation, neither is the wise profited at all by wisdom, nor the unlearned injured at all by ignorance. But if one may speak somewhat even wonderful, ignorance rather than wisdom is a condition suitable for that impression, and more easily dealt with. For the shepherd and the rustic will more quickly receive this, once for all repressing all doubting thoughts, and delivering himself to the Lord. In this way then He hath destroyed wisdom. For since she first cast herself down, she is ever after useful for nothing. Thus when she ought to have displayed her proper powers, and by the works to have seen the Lord, she would not. Wherefore though she were now willing to introduce herself, she is not able. For the matter is not of that kind: this way of knowing God being far greater than the other. You see then, faith and simplicity are needed, and this we



should seek everywhere, and prefer it before the wisdom which is from without. For "God," saith he, "hath made wisdom foolish."

But what is "He hath made foolish?" He hath shown it foolish in regard of receiving the faith. For since they prided themselves on it, He lost no time in exposing it. For what sort of wisdom is it, when it cannot discover the chief of things that are good? He caused her therefore to appear foolish, after she had first convicted herself. For if when discoveries might have been made by reasoning, she proved nothing, now when things proceed on a larger scale, how will she be able to accomplish aught? now when there is need of faith alone, and not of acuteness? You see then, God hath shown her to be foolish.

It was His good pleasure too by the foolishness of the Gospel to save; foolishness, I say, not real, but appearing to be such. For that which is more wonderful yet is His having prevailed by bringing in, not another such wisdom more abundant than the first, but what seemed to be foolishness. He cast out Plato, for example, not by means of another philosopher of more skill, but by an unlearned fisherman. For thus the defeat became greater, and the victory more splendid.

Ver. 22-24. Next, to show the power of the Cross, he saith, "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God."

Vast is the import of the things here spoken! For he means to say how by contraries God hath overcome, and how the Gospel is not of man. What he saith is something of this sort. When, saith he, we say unto the Jews, Believe; they answer, Raise the dead, Heal the demoniacs, Show unto us signs. But instead thereof what say we?

That He was crucified, and died, who is preached. And this is enough, not only to fail in drawing over the unwilling, but utterly to drive away those even who are willing. Nevertheless, it drives not away, but attracts, and holds fast, and overcomes.

Again; the Greeks demand of us a rhetorical style, and the acuteness of sophistry. But we to these also preach the Cross: and that which in the case of the Jews is deemed to be of weakness, this in the case of the Greeks is foolishness. Wherefore, when we not only fail in producing what they demand, but also produce the very opposites of their demand; (for the Cross has not merely no appearance of being a sign sought out by reasoning, but even the very annihilation of a sign;—is not merely deemed no proof of power, but a conviction of weakness;—not merely no display of wisdom, but a ground for surmising foolishness);—when therefore they who seek for signs and wisdom not only receive not the things which they ask, but even hear the contrary to what they desire, and then by means of contraries are persuaded;—how is not the power of Him that is preached unspeakable? As if to some one tempest-tost and longing for a haven, you were to show not a haven but another wilder portion of the sea, and so could make him follow with thankfulness! Or as if a physician could attract to himself the man that was wounded and in need of remedies, by promising to cure him not with drugs, but with burning of him again! For this is a result of great power indeed. So also the Apostles prevailed, not simply by a sign, but even by a thing which seemed contrary to all the known signs. Which thing also Christ did in the case of the blind man. For when He would heal him, He restored him by a thing which increased the blindness: i. e. He put on clay. As then by means of clay He healed the blind man, so also by means of the Cross hath He brought the world to Himself. That certainly was adding an offence,

not taking an offence away. So did He also in the Creation, working out things by their contraries. With sand, for instance, He walled in the sea, having made the weak a bridle to the strong. He placed the earth upon water, having taken order that the heavy and the dense might be borne on the soft and fluid. By means of the Prophets again with a small piece of wood He raised up iron from the bottom. In like manner also with the Cross He hath drawn the world to Himself. For as the water beareth up the earth, so also the Cross beareth up the world. You see now, it is proof of great power and wisdom, to convince by means of the things which tell directly against us. Thus the Cross seems to be matter of offence; and yet far from scandalizing, it even attracts.

Ver. 25. All these things, therefore, Paul bearing in mind, and being struck with astonishment, said, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;" in relation to the Cross, speaking of a folly and weakness, not real but apparent. For he is answering with respect unto the other party's opinion. For that which philosophers were not able by means of reasoning to accomplish, this, what seemed to be foolishness did excellently well. Which then is the wiser, he that persuadeth the many or but few, I should say, no one? He who persuadeth concerning the greatest points, or about matters which are nothing? What great labors did Plato endure, and his followers, discoursing to us about a line, and an angle, and a point, and about numbers even and odd, and equal unto one another and unequal, and such-like spiderwebs (for indeed those webs are not more useless to man's life, than were these subjects): and without doing good to any one great or small by their means, so he made an end of his life. How greatly did he labor, endeavoring to show that the soul is immortal! and even as he came he went away, having spoken nothing with certainty, nor per-

suaded any hearer. But the Cross wrought persuasion by means of unlearned men; yea it persuaded even the whole world: and not about common things, but in discourse of God and the godliness which is according to truth, and the evangelical way of life, and the judgment of the things to come. And of all men it made philosophers: the very rustics, the utterly unlearned. Behold how "the foolishness of God is wiser than men," and "the weakness stronger!" How, *stronger*? Because it overran the whole world, and took all by main force, and while men were endeavoring by ten thousands to quench the name of the Crucified, the contrary came to pass: that flourished and increased more and more, but they perished and wasted away; and the living, in war with the dead, had no power. So that when the Greek calls me foolish, he shows himself exceedingly above measure foolish: since I who am esteemed by him a fool, evidently appear wiser than the wise. When he calleth me weak, then he showeth himself to be weaker. For the noble things which publicans and fishermen were able to effect by the grace of God, these, philosophers, and rhetoricians, and tyrants, and in short the whole world, running ten thousand ways here and there, could not even form a notion of. For what did not the Cross introduce? The doctrine concerning the Immortality of the Soul; that concerning the Resurrection of the Body; that concerning the contempt of things present; that concerning the desire of things future. Yea, Angels it hath made of men, and all, everywhere, practise self-denial, and show forth all kinds of fortitude.

But among them also, it will be said, many have been found contemners of death. Tell me who? was it he who drank the hemlock? But if thou wilt, I can bring forward ten thousand such from within the Church. For had it been lawful when persecution befell them to drink hemlock and depart, all had become more famous than he. And besides, he drank when he was not at liberty to drink or not to

drink; but willing or against his will he must have undergone it: no effect surely of fortitude, but of necessity, and nothing more. For even robbers and man-slayers, having fallen under the condemnation of their judges, have suffered things more grievous. But with us it is all quite the contrary. For not against their will did the martyrs endure, but of their will, and being at liberty not to suffer; showing forth fortitude harder than all adamant. This then you see is no great wonder, that he whom I was mentioning drank hemlock, it being no longer in his power not to drink, and also when he had arrived at a very great age. For when he despised life he stated himself to be seventy years old; if this can be called despising. For I for my part could not affirm it: nor, what is more, can any one else. But show me some one enduring firm in torments for godliness' sake, as I show thee ten thousand everywhere in the world. Who, while his nails were tearing out, nobly endured? Who, while his joints were wrenching asunder? Who, while his body was enduring spoil, member by member? or his head? Who, while his bones were being heaved out by levers? Who, while placed without intermission upon frying-pans? Who, when thrown into a caldron? Show me these instances. For to die by hemlock is all as one with a sleeping man's continuing in a state of sleep. Nay even sweeter than sleep is this sort of death, if report say true. But if certain [of them] did endure torments, yet of these too the praise is gone to nothing. For on some disgraceful occasion they perished; some for revealing mysteries; some for aspiring to dominion; others detected in the foulest crimes; others again at random, and fruitlessly, and ignorantly, there being no reason for it, made away with themselves. But not so with us. Wherefore of their deeds nothing is said; but these flourish and daily increase. Which Paul having in mind said, "The weakness of God is stronger than all men."

For that the Gospel is divine, even from hence is evident; namely, from what quarter could it have occurred to twelve ignorant men to attempt such great things? who sojourned in marshes, in rivers, in deserts; who never at any time perhaps had entered into a city nor into a forum:—whence did it occur, to set themselves in array against the whole world? For that they were timid and unmanly, he shows who wrote of them, not shrinking back, nor enduring to throw their failings into the shade: which indeed of itself is a very great token of the truth. What then doth he say about them? That when Christ was apprehended, after ten thousand wonders, the rest fled; and he who remained, being the leader of the rest, denied. Whence was it then that they who, when Christ was alive, endured not the attack of the Jews; now that He was dead and buried, and, as ye say, had not risen again, nor had any talk with them, nor infused courage into them,—whence did they set themselves in array against so great a world? Would they not have said among themselves, “What ever meaneth this? Himself He was not able to save, and will He protect us? Himself He defended not when alive, and will He stretch out the hand unto us now that He is dead? Himself, when alive, subdued not even one nation; and are we to convince the whole world by uttering His Name?” How, I ask, could all this be reasonable, I will not say, as something to be done, but even as something to be imagined? From whence it is plain, that had they not seen Him after He was risen, and received most ample proof of His power, they would not have ventured so great a cast.

For suppose they had possessed friends innumerable; would they not presently have got them all for enemies, disturbing ancient customs, and removing their fathers’ land-marks? But as it was, they had before gotten them for enemies, all, both their own countrymen and foreigners. For although they had been recommended to veneration by

everything external, would not all men have abhorred them, introducing a new polity? But now they were even void of all; and it was likely that even on that account all would hate and scorn them at once. For whom will you name? The Jews? Nay, they had against them an inexpressible hatred on account of the things which had been done unto the Master. The Greeks then? Why, first of all, these had rejected one not inferior to them; and no men know these things so well as the Greeks. For Plato, who wished to strike out a new form of government, or rather a part of government; and that, not by changing the customs relating to the gods, but merely by substituting one line of conduct for another; being cast out of Sicily, went near to lose his life. This however did not ensue: so that he lost his liberty alone. And had not a certain Barbarian been more gentle than the tyrant of Sicily, nothing could have rescued the philosopher from slavery throughout life in a foreign land. And yet it is not all one to innovate in affairs of a kingdom, and in matters of religious worship. For the latter more than anything else causes disturbance and troubles men. For to say, "let such and such an one marry such a woman, and let the guardians [of the commonwealth] exercise their guardianship so and so," is not enough to cause any great disturbance: and especially when all this is lodged in a book, and no great anxiety on the part of the legislator to carry the proposals into practice. On the other hand, to say, "they be no gods which men worship, but demons; He who was crucified is God;" ye well know how great wrath it kindled, how severely men must have paid for it, what a flame of war it fanned.

For Protagoras, who was one of them, having dared to say, "I know of no gods," not going round the world and proclaiming it, but in a single city, was in the most imminent peril of his life. And Diagoras the Milesian, and Theodorus, who was called Atheist, although they had friends,

and that influence which comes from eloquence, and were held in admiration because of their philosophy; yet nevertheless none of these profited them. And the great Socrates too, he who surpassed in philosophy all among them, for this reason drank hemlock, because in his discourses concerning the gods he was suspected of moving things a little aside. Now if the suspicion alone of innovation brought so great danger on philosophers and wise men, and on those who had attained boundless popularity; and if they were not only unable to do what they wished, but were themselves also driven from life and country; how canst thou choose but be in admiration and astonishment, when thou seest that the fisherman hath produced such an effect upon the world, and accomplished his purposes; hath overcome both Barbarians and Greeks—all of them?

But they did not, you will say, introduce strange gods as the others did. Well, and in that you are naming the very point most to be wondered at: that the innovation is twofold, both to pull down those which are, and to announce the Crucified. For from whence came it into their minds to proclaim such things? whence, to be confident about their event? Whom of those before them could they perceive to have prospered in any such attempt? Were not all men worshipping devils? Were not all used to make gods of the elements? Was not the difference [but] in the mode of impiety? But nevertheless they attacked all, and overthrew all, and overran in a short time the whole world, like a sort of winged beings; making no account of dangers, of deaths, of the difficulty of the thing, of their own fewness, of the multitude of the opponents, of the authority, the rank, the wisdom of those at war with them. For they had above all these, mightier aid, the power of Him that had been crucified and was risen again. It would not have been so wondrous, had they chosen to wage war with the world in the literal sense, as this which in fact has taken place. For



according to the law of battle they might have stood over against the enemies, and occupying some adverse ground, have arrayed themselves accordingly, to meet the array of their foes, and have taken their time for attack and close conflict. But in this case it is not so. For they had no camp of their own, but were absolutely mingled with their enemies, and thus overcame them. Even in the midst of their enemies as they went about, they glided away from their hold, and became superior, and achieved a splendid victory; a victory which fulfils the prophecy that saith, "Even in the midst of thine enemies thou shalt have dominion." For this it was which was full of all astonishment, that their enemies having them in their power, and casting them into prisons and chains, not only did not vanquish them, but themselves also eventually had to stoop under them: the scourgers to the scourged, the binders in chains to those who were bound, the persecutors to the fugitives. All these things then we say unto the Greeks, yea rather more than these; for the truth has enough and greatly to spare. And if ye will follow the argument, we will teach you the whole method of fighting against them. In the mean while let us hold fast these two heads; How did the weak overcome the strong? and, From whence came it into their thoughts, being such as they were, to form such plans, unless they enjoyed Divine aid?

So far then as to what we have to say. But let us show forth by our actions all excellencies of conduct, and kindle abundantly the fire of virtue. For "ye are lights," saith he, "shining in the midst of the world." And unto each of us God hath committed a greater function than He hath to the sun: greater than heaven, and earth, and sea; and by so much greater, as spiritual things be more excellent than things sensible. When then we look unto the solar orb, and admire the beauty, and the body, and the brightness of the luminary, let us consider again that greater and

better is the light which is in us, as indeed the darkness also is more dreadful unless we take heed. And in fact a deep night oppresses the whole world. This is what we have to dispel and dissolve. It is night not among heretics, nor among Greeks only, but also in the multitude on our side, in respect of doctrines and of life. For many entirely disbelieve the resurrection; many fortify themselves with their horoscope; many adhere to superstitious observances, and to omens, and auguries, and presages. And some likewise employ amulets and charms. But to these also we will speak afterwards, when we have finished what we have to say to the Greeks.

In the mean while hold fast the things which have been said, and be ye fellow-helpers with me in the battle; by your way of life attracting them to us and changing them. For, as I am always saying, He that teaches high morality ought first to teach it in his own person, and be such as his hearers cannot do without. Let us therefore become such, and make the Greeks feel kindly towards us. And this will come to pass if we make up our minds not to do ill, but rather to suffer ill. Do we not see when little children being borne in their father's arms, give him that carries them blows on the cheek, how sweetly the father lets the boy have his fill of wrath, and when he sees that he has spent his passion, how his countenance brightens up? In like manner let us also act; and as fathers with children, so let us discourse with the Greeks. For all the Greeks are children. And this, some of their own writers have said, that "that people are children always, and no Greek is an old man." Now children cannot bear to take thought for anything useful; so also the Greeks would be for ever at play; and they lie on the ground, grovelling in posture and in affections. Moreover, children oftentimes, when we are discoursing about important things, give no heed to anything that is said, but will even be laughing all the time:

such also are the Greeks. When we discourse of the Kingdom, they laugh. And as spittle dropping in abundance from an infant's mouth, which oftentimes spoils its meat and drink, such also are the words flowing from the mouth of the Greeks, vain and unclean. Even if thou art giving children their necessary food, they keep on vexing those who furnish it with evil speech, and we must bear with them all the while. Again, children, when they see a robber entering and taking away the furniture, far from resisting, even smile on him in his mischievous craft; but shouldst thou take away the little basket or the jingles or any other of their play-things, they take it to heart and fret, tear themselves, and stamp on the floor; just so do the Greeks also: when they behold the devil pilfering all their paternal wealth, and even the things which support their life, they laugh and run to him as to a friend: but should any one take away any possession, be it wealth or any childish thing whatsoever of that kind, they cry, they tear themselves. And as children expose their limbs unconsciously and blush not for shame; so the Greeks, wallowing in whoredoms and adulteries, and laying bare the laws of nature, and introducing unlawful intercourses, are not abashed. *great applause*

Ye have given me vehement applause and acclamation: but with all your applause have a care lest you be among those of whom these things are said. Wherefore I beseech you all to become men: since, so long as we are children, how shall we teach them manliness? How shall we restrain them from childish folly? Let us, therefore, become men; that we may arrive at the measure of the stature which hath been marked out for us by Christ, and may obtain the good things to come: through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom unto the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, power, honor, now and henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

## XIX.

### MARKS OF LOVE TO GOD.

HALL.

[ROBERT HALL, one of the most famous of English divines, was born at Arnsby, Leicestershire, May 2d 1764, and died February 21st 1831. He studied at King's College, Aberdeen, and at nineteen became an assistant Baptist minister in Broadmead Chapel, near Bristol. Subsequently he labored in Cambridge and Leicester, returning to Bristol in 1835. His treasures of learning and gifts of glowing eloquence were unsurpassed. Artless, earnest, sincere, and wholly absorbed in his discourse, his hearers would grow so entranced by his sublime appeals, that often many would start to their feet and remain standing till he ceased speaking. Dugald Stewart called him a writer of English in its perfection, "combining the beauties of Johnson, Addison, and Burke, without their imperfections." He suffered acutely from spine disease, and had several attacks of mental derangement, but was till death a faithful pastor and student. Through life he ardently advocated "mixed" or open communion with Christians.]

*"But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."*—John v. 42.

THE persons whom our Lord addressed in these words made a high profession of religion, valued themselves upon their peculiar opportunities of knowing the true God and his will, and proclaimed themselves as the Israel and the temple of the Lord, while they despised the surrounding pagans as those who were strangers to the divine law. Yet the self-complacent Pharisees of our Saviour's age were as far from the love of God, he assures them in the text, as any of those who had never heard of his name. In this respect, *many of "the first were last, and the last first."* The rejection of the gospel evinces a hardness of heart which is *decisive* against the character; and, in the case of the Pharisees, it gave ample evidence that they possessed no love of God. Had they really known *God*, as our Lord

argues, they would have known *himself* to be sent by God : whereas, in proving the bitter enemies of Christ, they proved that they were in a state of enmity against God. By parity of reason, *we*, my brethren, who know God and his word in the way of Christian profession, ought *not* to take it for granted that we possess the love of God, and are in the way of eternal life : the same self-delusion may overtake *us* also ; and similar admonitions may be no less necessary to many present, than to the Pharisees of old. Suffer then, my brethren, the word of exhortation, while I invite each individual seriously to consider this subject, with a view to the discovery of his real character.

In proceeding to lay down certain *marks* of grace, let it be premised, that either these marks partake of the *nature* of true religion, or they do *not*. If they *do*, they must be *identified* with it, and here the mark is the *thing* : if they do *not* partake of its nature, some of them may exist as indications where genuine religion is not. It is necessary, then, that we combine a *variety* of particular *signs* of grace : any *one* taken by itself, may, or may *not*, exist, *without* true religion ; but where *many* are combined, no just doubt can remain.

Whether you have the love of God in your soul, presents a most critical subject of inquiry ; since the love of God will be acknowledged by all to be the great, the essential, principle of true religion. The simple question, then, to which I would call your attention, is this : “ Am I, or am I not, a sincere lover of the Author of my being ? ”

In endeavoring to assist you in the decision of this momentous question, as it respects yourselves,

I. I shall entreat your attention while I suggest a variety of *marks* which indicate love to God ; and,

II. Supposing the conviction produced by the statement to be, that you have *not* the love of God, I shall point out the proper improvement of such a conviction.

I. In suggesting various marks by which you may ascertain whether you love God, or not, I would mention,

1. The *general* bent and turn of your *thoughts*, when not under the immediate control of circumstances; for these, you are aware, give a new and peculiar bias to our thoughts, and stamp them with an impress of their own. There is an infinite variety of thoughts continually passing through the mind of every individual: of these, some are thrown up by occasions; but others, and often the greater part, follow the habitual train of our associations. It is not to thoughts of the former kind that I refer; it is to those of the latter class,—those *voluntary* thoughts which spring up of *themselves* in the mind of every person: it is these, not the former, that afford clear indication of the *general temper and disposition*. The question I would propose to you is, What is the bent of your thoughts, when, disengaged from the influence of any particular occurrence, you are left to *yourselves*, in the intervals of retirement and tranquillity, in the silence of the midnight watches, and, in short, whenever your mind is left free to its own spontaneous musings? Are the thoughts most familiar to your mind, at such times, thoughts of God and the things of God;—or, are they thoughts that turn upon the present world and its transient concerns? Are they confined, for the most part, within the narrow circle of time and sense; or, do they make frequent and large excursions into the spiritual and eternal world? The answer to *this* question will go far to decide whether you have, or have *not*, the love of God. It is impossible that such an object as the Divine Being should be absent long from your thoughts; impossible that *his* remembrance should long remain merged in the stream of other imaginations; unless you are supposed chargeable with a *decided indifference* to divine things! Unless you are destitute of love to God, you can never be so utterly uncongenial in sentiment and feeling with the Psalmist, when he says, “My

mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, while I meditate upon thee in the night watches:" "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" When that man of God gazed upon the starry heavens, his mind was not merely wrought into astonishment at the physical energy there displayed; he was still more deeply lost in grateful admiration of the mercy of Providence as manifested to *man*:—a sinful child of dust, and yet visited by God in the midst of so magnificent a universe! But when day passes after day, and night after night, without any serious thoughts of God, it is plain that He is not the *home* of your mind, not your *portion*, *centre*, and *resting-place*: and, if this is the case, it is equally plain that you are not in a state of acceptance with Him; since nothing can be more certain than that, *as our thoughts are, such must be our character*. I do not ask what are your thoughts at particular *times*, or under the influence of some particular *event*: there may be little difference, on some occasions, between those who remember, and those who neglect, God *habitually*. The charge against the ungodly is, that "God is not in *all* their thoughts." If there are any here who feel this charge as bearing against *themselves*, let them take that solemn warning given by God himself at the close of the fiftieth Psalm: "Oh, consider this, ye that *forget* God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you!"

2. Let me request you to consider seriously how you stand disposed to the *exercises of religion*. If God is the object of your love, you will gladly avail yourselves of the most favorable opportunities of cultivating a closer friendship with the Father of your spirits: on the contrary, he who feels no regard for these opportunities, proves that he has no love to God, and will never be able to establish the conviction that God is his friend. Wherever there exists a sincere friendship, opportunities of cultivating it are gladly embraced, and the opposite privations are regretted. Where

an *habitual neglect* of sacred exercises prevails, it must be interpreted as if it said, like those whom the prophet describes, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from amongst us. Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways!" If your closets seldom witness your private devotions, if your moments in retirement are languid and uninteresting,—your religion can have no hold on your heart; and the reason why your religion has no hold on your heart, is because you have no love of God. There are some whose religion sits easy and delightful upon them; its acts and functions are free and lively: there are others who seem to bear their religion as a burthen, to drag their duties as a *chain*—as *no vital part of themselves*, but rather a cumbrous *appendage*: this is a decisive and melancholy symptom of a heart alienated from God. There is no genuine religion, no real contact of the heart with the best of beings, unless it makes us continually resort to Him as our *chief joy*. The Psalmist is always expressing his fervent desires after God: after the light of the divine countenance, and the sense of the divine favor: but do you suppose such desires *peculiar* to the state of believers under the *Old Testament*? *No*, my brethren; there exist more abundant reasons than ever, since the gospel of Christ has been displayed in all the glorious fullness of its blessings, why our souls should be inflamed with such feelings as those which inspired the Psalmist, when he exclaimed, "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God!"

3. If you would ascertain whether you love God, consider how you stand affected toward the *word* of God. We can entertain no just thoughts of God, but such as we derive from his own word: we can acquire no true knowledge of God, nor cherish any suitable affections towards him, unless they are such as his own revelation authorizes. Otherwise we must suppose that revelation insufficient for its specific purposes, and set the *means* against the *end*. All, therefore,



who sincerely love God, are *students* of his word; they here, also, accord in soul with the Psalmist, and, like him, can say, "O how I love thy word! in it is my meditation all the day:" they eat it as food for their souls, and find it *sweeter than honey*. They go to it as to an inexhaustible fountain, and drink from it streams of sacred light and joy. ~~A~~ neglected Bible is too unambiguous a sign of an unsanctified heart; since that blessed book cannot fail to attract every one that loves its Divine Author. How is it possible to delight in God, and yet neglect *that* word which alone reveals him in his true and glorious character,—alone discovers the way by which he comes into unison with us, and condescends to pardon us, to love us, and to guide us through all this mysterious state of being? It is observable, that the *only* persons who are inattentive to their own sacred books are to be found among *Christians*. *Mahomedans* commit large portions of the Koran to memory; the *Jews* regard the Old Testament with reverence; the *Hindoo Bramins* are enthusiastically attached to their Shaster; while *Christians* alone neglect their Bible. And the reason is, that the *Scriptures* are so much more spiritual than the religious books received by others: they afford so little scope for mere amusement or self-complacency;—they place the reader *alone with God*,—they withdraw him from the things that are seen and temporal, and fix him among the things that are unseen and eternal,—they disclose to his view at once the secret evils of his own condition, and the awful purity of that Being with whom he has to do. No wonder the ungodly man hates their light, neither comes to their light, but retires from it farther and farther into the shades of guilty ignorance. How melancholy the infatuation of such a character!

4. Estimate your character in respect to your love of God, by reflecting with what sentiments you regard the *people* of God. God has a people peculiarly his own: they are *not* of that world to which they outwardly belong,—not

conformed to it in the spirit of their mind; they stand apart, many of them at least, in conspicuous conformity to Jesus Christ, and earnest expectation of the glory which He has promised. How, then, do you regard these decided followers of God? Do you shun their society with aversion and secret shame; or do you enjoy their communion as one of the most delightful among your Christian privileges? Are you content merely to be the companion of those who "have a *name* to live, but are dead:" or can you say with the Psalmist, "My delight is in the excellent of the earth?" or, with the beloved disciple, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren?" for, as he adds, "He that loveth him that begot, loveth him that is begotten:" if you do not love the *image* which you have *seen*, how can you love the *unseen* original? If the features of holiness and grace in the *creature* are not attractive to your view, how can your affections rise to the perfect *essence*? How can you ascend to the very *Sun* itself, when you cannot enjoy even the faint *reflection* of its glory? He who knew the heart, could alone say to those around him, "I *know you*, that ye have not the love of God in you:" but though none can address you now in the same tone of divine authority, yet you may hear it uttered by a voice within—the voice of your own conscience: you may know, without any perturbations of hope or fear, by the spiritual insensibility and inaction of your soul,—by *this* you may know, with equal certainty as by a voice from heaven, that *you have not the love of God in you!*

5. Consider the disposition you entertain toward the person and office of the *Son of God*. "If ye had loved the Father, ye would have loved me also," was the constant argument of Jesus Christ to those Pharisees whom he addresses in the text. For Jesus Christ is the express *image* of God: the effulgence of the divine character is attempered in *him*, to suit the views of sinful humanity. In the life of Jesus

Christ, we see how the Divine Being conducts himself in human form and in our own circumstances: we behold how he bears all the sorrows, and passes through all the temptations, of flesh and blood. Such, indeed, is the identity, so perfect the *oneness* of character, between the *man Christ Jesus* and the *Divine Being*,—that our Saviour expressly assures us, “He that hath seen *me*, hath seen the *Father*; I and my Father are *one*.” The purpose for which God was manifested in the flesh was, not to reveal high speculations concerning the nature of the Deity: it was to *bear* our sorrows, and to *die* for our sins. But can *you* contemplate Him, thus stooping to your condition, thus *mingling* with every interest of *your own*, and not be *moved* by such a spectacle?—not be *attracted*, *fixed*, filled with grateful astonishment and devotion,—crucified, as it were, on the cross of Christ, to the flesh, and to the world? What mark, then, of our possessing no love of *God* can equal this, that we are without love to *Jesus Christ*?—that neither the *visibility* of his divine excellence, nor his *participation* of all our human sufferings, can reach our hearts, and command our affections?

6. In examining whether you love God, examine how you are affected by his *benefits*. *These* are so numerous and so distinguished, that they ought to excite our most ardent gratitude: night and day they are experienced by us; they pervade every moment of our being. We know that favors from an *enemy* derive a *taint* from the hands through which they are received, and excite alienation rather than attachment: but the kindness of a *friend*, by constantly reminding us of himself, endears that friend more and more to our hearts; and thus, he that has no love to God receives all his favors without the least attraction toward their Author, whom he regards rather as his enemy than his friend. But the Christian feels his love of God excited by every fresh instance of his goodness. The mercies of God have accompanied you through every stage of your journey; and they

are exhibited to you in his word as stretching through a vast eternity. Are *these* the *only* benefits you can receive without gratitude, and suffer to pass unregarded? *How*, then, can any love of God dwell in your bosom?

7. Consider, in the next place, in what manner you are impressed by the sense of your *sins*. The question is *not* whether you *have* any sins,—none can admit a doubt on this point; the only inquiry is, how you are affected by those sins? Are they remembered by you with a sentiment of *tender regret*, of *deep confusion and humiliation*, that you should ever have so requited such infinite goodness? And is this sentiment combined with a *sacred resolution to go and sin no more*,—to *devote* yourself to the service of your Divine Benefactor? If you can live without an habitual sense of penitential tenderness and reverential fear, be assured you cannot love God; you have no experience of those scripture declarations: “They shall FEAR the Lord and his goodness in the latter days;” “There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be FEARED;” you know not yet that “the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.” If the mind is softened by the love of God, all his favors serve to inflame its gratitude, and confirm its devotion to his will: but he who has no love of God in his soul, thinks of nothing but how he may *escape* from God’s hand, and selfishly devours all his favors without an emotion of gratitude to the Giver.

8. Finally, let me remind you to consider how you are affected to the *present world*. If you could only be exempt from its afflictions, would you wish it to be your *lasting* home? If you could surround yourself with all its advantages and enjoyments, would you be content to dwell in it for ever? Yet you know that it is a place of separation and exile from the Divine Majesty;—that it is a scene of darkness, in comparison with heaven, very faintly illuminated with the beams of his distant glory;—that its inhabitant is constrained to say, “I have heard of thee by the hearing

of the ear, but mine eye hath *not yet seen thee*;"—while *heaven* is the proper dwelling-place of God and his people! Could you then consent to remain here always, without ever *seeing as you are seen,—seeing light in his light,—without ever beholding his glory*; without ever drinking at the fountain, and basking in *that presence which is fullness of joy, and life for evermore*! always to remain *immersed* in the shadows of time—entombed in its corruptible possessions! *never* to ascend up on high to God and Christ and the glories of the eternal world! If such is the state of your spirit, you want the essential principle of a Christian—you want the love of God. The genuine Christian, the lover of God, is certain to feel himself a "*stranger on the earth*." No splendor, no emolument of this world,—not all the fascinations of sensual pleasure,—can detain his heart below the skies, or keep him from sympathizing with the sentiment of the Psalmist: "As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake in thy likeness." I do not ask whether you have, at present, "*a desire to depart*:" perhaps you may not be as yet sufficiently prepared and established to entertain so exalted a desire; but still, if you have received a *new heart*, you will deprecate nothing so much as having your portion in *this* life,—as having your eternal abode on *earth*. It is the character of faith to dwell much in eternity: the apostle says, in the name of all real believers, "We look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal."

II. And now, my brethren, supposing the preceding remarks to have produced in any of you the conviction *that you have not the love of God in you*, permit me very briefly to point out the proper *improvement* of such a conviction.

1. First, it should be accompanied with deep *humiliation*. If you labored under the privation of some bodily organ, requisite to the discharge of an animal function, you would feel it as in some degree a humiliating circumstance; but

what would be any defect of this kind, however serious, in comparison with that *great want* under which you labor—the want of piety, the calamity of a *soul estranged from the love of God!* What are all other subjects of humiliation, compared with *this*—a *moral fall*, a *spiritual death in sin*: and this, unless it be removed, the sure precursor of the *second death—eternal ruin!* “This is a lamentation, indeed, and it shall be for a lamentation.”

Suppose the children of a family, reared and provided for by the most affectionate of parents, to rise up in rebellion against their father, and cast off all the feelings of filial tenderness and respect; would any qualities those children might possess, any *appearances* of virtue they might exhibit in other respects, compensate for such an unnatural, such an awful deformity of character? Transfer this representation to your conduct in relation to God: “If I,” says he, “am a *father*, where is my fear? if I am a *master*, where is my honor?” “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me: the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.”

2. And let your humiliation be accompanied with *concern and alarm*. To be alienated from the Great Origin of being; to be severed, or to sever yourself from the essential Author and element of all felicity, must be a calamity which none can understand, an infinite woe which none can measure or conceive! If the stream is cut off from the fountain, it soon ceases to flow, and its waters are dissipated in the air: and if the soul is cut off from *God*, it *dies!* Its *vital contact* with God,—its spiritual union with the Father of Spirits through the blessed Mediator, is the only life and beauty of the immortal soul. All, without this, are *dead*—“*dead in trespasses and sins!*” A living death—a state of restless wanderings, and unsatisfied desires! What a condition theirs! And, oh! what a prospect for such, when they look beyond this world!

Who will give them a welcome when they enter an eternal state? What reception will they meet with, and where? What consolation amidst their loss and their sufferings, but that of the fellow-sufferers plunged in the same abyss of ruin? Impenitent sinners are *allied* to evil spirits; they have an *affinity* with the kingdom of darkness; and when they die, they are emphatically said to "*go to THEIR OWN place!*"

3. This is an *awful* state for any to be in at present; but, blessed be God, it is not yet a *hopeless* situation. Let no person say, "I find by what I have heard, that I do not love God, and therefore I can entertain no hope." There is a way of return and recovery open to all. Jesus Christ, my dear brethren, proclaims to you all, "I am the way. No man can come to the Father but by me:"—but every one that will may come by this new and living way; and, if you lose life eternal, you lose it because,—according to his words just before the text,—because "*you will not come to Christ that you may have life.*" If you feel the misery, deformity, and danger of your state, then listen to his invitation, and embrace his promise. See the whole weight of your guilt transferred to his cross! See how God can be at once the just and the justifier! Take of the blood of sprinkling, and be at peace! *His blood cleanseth from all sin:* He will send that Spirit into your heart, which will manifest him to you; and where that Spirit is, *there is liberty* and holy love. *He* is the *mystical* ladder, let down from heaven to earth, on which angels are continually ascending and descending, in token of an alliance established between God and man. United by faith to Jesus Christ, you shall become *a habitation of God through the Spirit*; the Father will make you a partaker of his *love*, the Son of his *grace*, angels of their *friendship*; and you shall be preserved, and progressively sanctified; until, by the last change, all remains of the grand epidemic source of evils shall be for ever removed from your soul; and the *love of God shall constitute your eternal felicity.*

## XX.

### CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST.

SPURGEON.

[CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON, perhaps the most widely popular of living English preachers, is the son and grandson of dissenting ministers. He was born at Kelvedon, Essex, June 19th 1834. After an academic training in the Maidstone Agricultural College, he served as a tutor several years. In 1850 he began to preach, and in his nineteenth year was installed in the New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, London. His great Baptist Tabernacle on the Kensington Road was consecrated in 1861, and its regular audience numbers five thousand. Yearly volumes of his Sermons are published, and their sales equal a half million copies. "Morning by Morning" and "Evening by Evening" are attractive guides for religious meditation. Power, fervor of conception, and passionateness of appeal, individualize his Sermons, rather than delicacy and the graces of culture, every thought translucent with Christian earnestness. Whole-souled, and full of labors, he is yet in the early prime of manhood.]

*"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*—2 Cor. viii. 9.

THE apostle, in this chapter, was endeavoring to stir up the Corinthians to liberality. He desired them to contribute something for those who were the poor of the flock, that he might be able to minister to their necessities. He tells them, that the churches of Macedonia, though very much poorer than the church at Corinth, had done even beyond their means for the relief of the Lord's family, and he exhorts the Corinthians to do the same. But, suddenly recollecting that examples taken from inferiors seldom have a powerful effect, he lays aside his argument drawn from the church of Macedonia, and he holds before them a reason for liberality which the hardest heart can scarcely resist, if once that reason be applied by the Spirit. "My brethren," said he, "there is



One above, by whom you hope you have been saved, One whom you call Master and Lord: now if you will but imitate him, you cannot be ungenerous or illiberal. For, my brethren, I tell you a thing which is an old thing with you and an undisputed truth—"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Let this constrain you to benevolence." O Christian, whenever thou art inclined to an avaricious withholding from the church of God, think of thy Saviour giving up all that he had to serve thee; and canst thou then, when thou beholdest self-denial so noble,—canst thou then be selfish, and regard thyself, when the claims of the poor of the flock are pressed upon thee? Remember Jesus; think thou seest him look thee in the face and say to thee, "I gave myself for thee, and dost thou withhold thyself from me? For if thou dost so, thou knowest not my love in all its heights and depths and lengths and breadths."

And now, dear friends, the argument of the apostle shall be our subject to-day. It divides itself in an extremely simple manner. We have first, *the pristine condition of our Saviour*—"He was rich." We have next, *his condescension*—"He became poor." And then we have *the effect and result of his poverty*—"That we might be made rich." We shall then close by giving you a doctrine, a question, and an exhortation. May God bless all these, and help us to tell them aright.

I. First, then, our text tells us THAT JESUS CHRIST WAS RICH. Think not that our Saviour began to live when he was born of the Virgin Mary; imagine not that he dates his existence from the manger at Bethlehem; remember he is the Eternal, he is before all things, and by him all things consist. There was never a time in which there was not God. And just so, there was never a period in which there was not Christ Jesus our Lord. He is self-existent, hath no beginning

of days, neither end of years; he is the immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour. Now, in the past eternity which had elapsed before his mission to this world, we are told that Jesus Christ was rich; and to those of us who believe his glories and trust in his divinity, it is not hard to see how he was so. Jesus was rich *in possessions*. Lift up thine eye, believer, and for a moment review the riches of my Lord Jesus, before he condescended to become poor for thee. Behold him, sitting upon his throne and declaring his own all-sufficiency. "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the cattle on a thousand hills are mine. Mine are the hidden treasures of gold; mine are the pearls that the diver can not reach; mine every precious thing that earth hath seen." The Lord Jesus might have said, "I can stretch my sceptre from the east even to the west, and all is mine; the whole of this world, and yon worlds that glitter in far off space, all are mine. The illimitable expanse of unmeasured space, filled as it is with worlds that I have made, all this is mine. Fly upward, and thou canst not reach the summit of the hill of my dominions; dive downward, and thou canst not enter into the innermost depths of my sway. From the highest throne in glory to the lowest pit of hell, all, all is mine without exception. I can put the broad arrow of my kingdom upon everything that I have made."

But he had besides that which makes men richer still. We have heard of kings in olden times who were fabulously rich, and when their riches were summed up, we read in the old romances, "And this man was possessed of the philosopher's stone, whereby he turned all things into gold." Surely all the treasures that he had before were as nothing compared with this precious stone that brought up the rear. Now, whatever might be the wealth of Christ in things created, he had the *power of creation*, and therein lay his boundless wealth. If he had pleased he could have spoken worlds into existence; he had but to lift his finger, and a

new universe as boundless as the present would have leaped into existence. At the will of his mind, millions of angels would have stood before him, legions of bright spirits would have flashed into being. He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. He who said, "Light be," and light was, had power to say to all things, "Be," and they should be. Herein, then, lay his riches; this creating power was one of the brightest jewels of his crown.

We call men rich, too, who have *honor*, and though men have never so much wealth, yet if they be in disgrace and shame, they must not reckon themselves among the rich. But our Lord Jesus had honor, honor such as none but a divine being could receive. When he sat upon his throne, before he relinquished the glorious mantle of his sovereignty to become a man, all earth was filled with his glory. He could look both beneath and all around him, and the inscription, "Glory be unto God," was written over all space; day and night the smoking incense of praise ascended before him from golden viols held by spirits who bowed in reverence; the harps of myriads of cherubim and seraphim continually thrilled with his praise, and the voices of all those mighty hosts were ever eloquent in adoration. It may be, that on set days the princes from the far off realms, the kings, the mighty ones of his boundless realms, came to the court of Christ, and brought each his annual revenue. Oh, who can tell but that in the vast eternity, at certain grand eras, the great bell was rung, and all the mighty hosts that were created gathered together in solemn review before his throne? Who can tell the high holiday that was kept in the court of heaven when these bright spirits bowed before his throne in joy and gladness, and, all united, raised their voices in shouts and hallelujahs such as mortal ear hath never heard? Oh, can ye tell the depths of the rivers of praise that flowed hard by the city of God? Can ye imagine to yourselves the sweetness of that harmony that perpetually poured into the

ear of Jesus, Messias, King, Eternal, equal with God his Father? No; at the thought of the glory of his kingdom, and the riches and majesty of his power, our souls are spent within us, our words fail, we cannot utter the tithe of his glories.

Nor was he poor in any other sense. He that hath wealth on earth, and honor too, is poor if he hath not *love*. I would rather be the pauper, dependent upon charity, and have love, than I would be the prince, despised and hated, whose death is looked for as a boon. Without love, man is poor—give him all the diamonds, and pearls, and gold that mortal hath conceived. But Jesus was not poor in love. When he came to earth, he did not come to get our love because his soul was solitary. Oh no, his Father had a full delight in him from all eternity. The heart of Jehovah, the first person of the Sacred Trinity, was divinely, immutably linked to him; he was beloved of the Father and of the Holy Spirit; the three persons took a sacred complacency and delight in each other. And besides that, how was he loved by those bright spirits who had not fallen! I cannot tell what countless orders and creatures there are created who still stand fast in obedience to God. It is not possible for us to know whether there are, or not, as many races of created beings as we know there are created men on earth. We cannot tell but that in the boundless regions of space, there are worlds inhabited by beings infinitely superior to us; but certain it is, there were the holy angels, and they loved our Saviour; they stood day and night with wings outstretched, waiting for his commands, hearkening to the voice of his word; and when he bade them fly, there was love in their countenance, and joy in their hearts. They loved to serve him, and it is not all fiction that when there was war in heaven, and when God cast out the devil and his legions, then the elect angels showed their love to him, being valiant in fight and strong in power. He

wanted not our love to make him happy, he was rich enough in love without us.

Now, though a spirit from the upper world should come to tell you of the riches of Jesus he could not do it. Gabriel, in thy flights thou hast mounted higher than my imagination dares to follow thee, but thou hast never gained the summit of the throne of God.

“Dark with insufferable light thy skirts appear.”

Jesus, who is he that could look upon the brow of thy Majesty, who is he that could comprehend the strength of the arm of thy might? Thou art God, thou art infinite, and we poor finite things, are lost in thee. The insect of an hour cannot comprehend thyself. We bow before thee, we adore thee; thou art God over all, blessed for ever. But as for the comprehension of thy boundless riches, as for being able to tell thy treasures, or to reckon up thy wealth, that were impossible. All we know is, that the wealth of God, that the treasures of the infinite, that the riches of eternity, were all thine own: thou wast rich beyond all thought.

II. The Lord Jesus Christ, then, was rich. We all believe that, though none of us can truly speak it forth. Oh, how surprised angels were, when they were first informed that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Light and Majesty, intended to shroud himself in clay and become a babe, and live and die! We know not how it was first mentioned to the angels, but when the rumor first began to get afloat among the sacred hosts, you may imagine what strange wonderment there was. What! was it true that he whose crown was all bedight with stars, would lay that crown aside? What! was it certain that he about whose shoulders was cast the purple of the universe, would become a man dressed in a peasant's garment? Could it be true that he who was everlasting and immortal, would one day be nailed to a cross? Oh, how

their wonderment increased! They desired to look into it. And when he descended from on high, they followed him; for Jesus was "seen of angels," and seen in a special sense, for they looked upon him in rapturous amazement, wondering what it all could mean. "He for our sakes became poor." Do you see him as on that day of heaven's eclipse he did ungird his majesty? Oh, can ye conceive the yet increasing wonder of the heavenly hosts when the deed was actually done, when they saw the tiara taken off, when they saw him unbind his girdle of stars, and cast away his sandals of gold? Can ye conceive it, when he said to them, "I do not disdain the womb of the virgin; I am going down to earth to become a man"? Can ye picture them as they declared they would follow him! Yes, they followed him as near as the world would permit them. And when they came to earth they began to sing, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." Nor would they go away till they had made the shepherds wonder, and till heaven had hung out new stars in honor of the new-born King. And now wonder, ye angels, the Infinite has become an infant; he, upon whose shoulders the universe doth hang, hangs at his mother's breast; he who created all things, and bears up the pillars of creation, hath now become so weak that he must be carried by a woman! And oh, wonder, ye that knew him in his riches, whilst ye admire his poverty! Where sleeps the new born King? Had he the best room in Cæsar's palace? hath a cradle of gold been prepared for him, and pillows of down, on which to rest his head? No, where the ox fed, in the dilapidated stable, in the manger, there the Saviour lies, swathed in the swaddling bands of the children of poverty! Nor there doth he rest long; on a sudden his mother must carry him to Egypt; he goeth there, and becometh a stranger in a strange land. When he comes back, see him that made the worlds handle the hammer and the nails, assisting his father in the trade of a carpenter!

Mark him who has put the stars on high, and made them glisten in the night; mark him without one star of glory upon his brow—a simple child, as other children. Yet, leave for a while the scenes of his childhood and his earlier life; see him when he becomes a man, and now ye may say, indeed, that for our sakes he did become poor. Never was there a poorer man than Christ; he was the prince of poverty. He was the reverse of Croesus—he might be on the top of the hill of riches, *Christ* stood in the lowest vale of poverty. Look at his dress, it is woven from the top throughout, the garment of the poor! As for his food, he oftentimes did hunger; and always was dependent upon the charity of others for the relief of his wants! He who scattered the harvest o’er the broad acres of the world, had not sometimes wherewithal to stay the pangs of hunger? He who digged the springs of the ocean, sat upon a well and said to a Samaritan woman, “Give me to drink!” He rode in no chariot, he walked his weary way, foot sore, o’er the flints of Galilee! He had not where to lay his head. He looked upon the fox as it hurried to its burrow, and the fowl as it went to its resting-place, and he said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but I, the Son of man, have not where to lay my head.” He who had once been waited on by angels, becomes the servant of servants, takes a towel, girds himself, and washes his disciples’ feet! He who was once honored with the hallelujahs of ages, is now spit upon and despised! He who was loved by his Father, and had abundance of the wealth of affection, could say, “He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” Oh, for words to picture the humiliation of Christ! What leagues of distance between him that sat upon the throne, and him that died upon the cross! Oh, who can tell the mighty chasm between yon heights of glory, and the cross of deepest woe! Trace him, Christian, he has left thee his manger to show thee how God came down to

man. He hath bequeathed thee his cross, to show thee how man can ascend to God. Follow him, follow him, all his journey through; begin with him in the wilderness of temptation; see him fasting there, and hungering with the wild beasts around him; trace him along his weary way, as the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He is the by-word of the drunkard, he is the song of the scorner, and he is hooted at by the malicious; see him as they point their finger at him, and call him "drunken man and wine-bibber!" Follow him along his *via dolorosa*, until at last you meet him among the olives of Gethsemane; see him sweating great drops of blood! Follow him to the pavement of Gabbatha; see him pouring out rivers of gore beneath the cruel whips of Roman soldiers! With weeping eye follow him to the cross of Calvary, see him nailed there! Mark his poverty, so poor that they have stripped him naked from head to foot, and exposed him to the face of the sun! So poor, that when he asked them for water they gave him vinegar to drink! So poor that his unpillowed head is girt with thorns in death! Oh, Son of man, I know not which to admire most, thine height of glory, or thy depths of misery! Oh, Man, slain for us, shall we not exalt thee? God over all, blessed for ever, shall we not give thee the loudest song? "He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." If I had a tale to tell you this day, of some king, who, out of love to some fair maiden, left his kingdom and became a peasant like herself, ye would stand and wonder, and would listen to the charming tale; but when I tell of God concealing his dignity to become our Saviour, our hearts are scarcely touched. Ah, my friends, we know the tale so well, we have heard it so often; and, alas, some of us tell it so badly that we cannot expect that you would be as interested in it as the subject doth demand. But surely, as it is said of some great works of architecture, that though they be seen every morning, there is always something fresh to wonder at; so



we may say of Christ, that though we saw him every day, we should always see fresh reason to love, and wonder, and adore. "He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor."

I have thought that there is one peculiarity about the poverty of Christ, that ought not to be forgotten by us. Those who were nursed upon the lap of want feel less the woes of their condition. But I have met with others whose poverty I could pity. They were once rich; their very dress which now hangs about them in tatters, tells you that they once stood foremost in the ranks of life. You meet them amongst the poorest of the poor; you pity them more than those who have been born and bred to poverty, because they have known something better. Amongst all those who are poor, I have always found the greatest amount of suffering in those who had seen better days.

I can remember, even now, the look of some who have said to me when they have received assistance—and I have given it as delicately as I could, lest it should look like charity—"Ah, sir, I have known better days." And the tear stood in the eye, and the heart was smitten at bitter recollections. The least slight to such a person, or even too unmasked a kindness, becomes like a knife cutting the heart. "I have known better days," sounds like a knell over their joys. And verily our Lord Jesus might have said in all his sorrows, "I have known better days than these." Methinks when he was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, it must have been hard in him to have restrained himself from dashing the devil into pieces. If I had been the Son of God, methinks, feeling as I do now, if that devil had tempted me, I should have dashed him into the nethermost hell, in the twinkling of an eye! And then conceive the patience our Lord must have had, standing on the pinnacle of the temple, when the devil said, "Fall down and worship me." He would not touch him, the vile deceiver, but let him do what he pleased. Oh!

what might of misery and love there must have been in the Saviour's heart when he was spit upon by the men he had created; when the eyes he himself had filled with vision looked on him with scorn, and when the tongues, to which he himself had given utterance, hissed and blasphemed him! Oh, my friends, if the Saviour had felt as we do, and I doubt not he did feel in some measure as we do—only by great patience he curbed himself—methinks he might have swept them all away; and, as they said, he might have come down from the cross, and delivered himself, and destroyed them utterly. It was mighty patience that could bear to tread this world beneath his feet, and not to crush it, when it so ill-treated its Redeemer. You marvel at the patience which restrained him; you marvel also at the poverty he must have felt, the poverty of spirit, when they rebuked him and he reviled them not again; when they scoffed him, and yet he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He had seen brighter days; that made his misery more bitter, and his poverty more poor.

III. Well, now we come to the third point—WHY DID THE SAVIOUR COME TO DIE AND BE POOR? Hear this, ye sons of Adam—the Scripture says, "For your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich." For *your* sakes. Now, when I address you as a great congregation, you will not feel the beauty of this expression, "For *your* sake." Husband and wife, walking in the fear of God, let me take you by the hand and look you in the face, let me repeat those words, "for *your* sakes he became poor." Young man, let a brother of thine own age, look on thee and repeat these words, "Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor." Gray-headed believer, let me look on you and say the same, "For *your* sake he became poor." Brethren, take the word home, and see if it does not melt you—"Though he was rich, yet for *my* sake he became poor." Beg for the influences of the Spirit upon that truth, and it

will make your heart devout and your spirit loving—"I the chief of sinners am, yet for my sake he died." Come, let me hear you speak; let us bring the sinner here, and let him soliloquize—"I cursed him, I blasphemed, and yet for my sake he was made poor; I scoffed at his ministers, I broke his Sabbath, yet for my sake was he made poor. What! Jesus, couldst thou die for one who was not worth thy having? Couldst thou shed thy blood for one who would have shed thy blood, if it had been in his power? What! couldst thou die for one so worthless, so vile?' "Yes, yes," says Jesus, "I shed that blood for thee." Now let the saint speak: "I," he may say, "have professed to love him, but how cold my love, how little have I served him! How far have I lived from him; I have not had sweet communion with him as I ought to have had. When have I been spending and spent in his service? And yet, my Lord, thou dost say, 'for *thy* sake I was made poor.' " "Yes," saith Jesus, "see me in my miseries; see me in my agonies; see me in my death—all these I suffered for *thy* sake." Wilt thou not love him who loved thee to this great excess, and became poor for thy sake?

That, however, is not the point to which we wish to bring you, just now; the point is this, *the reason why Christ died* was, "that we through his poverty might be rich." He became poor from his riches, that our poverty might become rich out of his poverty. Brethren, we have now a joyful theme before us—those who are partakers of the Saviour's blood are rich. All those for whom the Saviour died, having believed in his name and given themselves to him, are this day rich. And yet I have some of you here who cannot call a foot of land your own. You have nothing to call your own to-day, you know not how you will be supported through another week; you are poor, and yet if you be a child of God, I do know that Christ's end is answered in you; *you are rich*. No, I did not mock you when I said you were rich:

I did not taunt you—you are. You are really rich; you are *rich in possessions*; you have in your possession now things more costly than gems, more valuable than gold and silver. “Silver and gold, have I none,” thou mayest say; but if thou canst say afterward, “Christ is all,” thou hast outspoken all that the man can say who had piles of gold and silver. “But,” thou sayest, “I have nothing.” Man, thou hast all things. Knowest thou not what Paul said? He declares that “things present and things to come, and this world, and life and death, all are yours and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” The great machinery of providence has no wheel which does not revolve for you. The great economy of grace with all its fullness, is yours. Remember that adoption, justification, sanctification, are all yours. Thou hast everything that heart can wish in spiritual things; and thou hast everything that is necessary for this life; for you know who hath said, “having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.” You are rich; rich with true riches, and not with the riches of a dream. There are times when men by night do scrape gold and silver together, like shells upon the sea shore; but when they wake in the morning they find themselves penniless. But, yours are everlasting treasures; yours are solid riches. When the sun of eternity shall have melted the rich man’s gold away, yours shall endure. A rich man has a *cistern* full of riches, but a poor saint has got a *fountain* of mercy, and he is the richest who has a fountain. Now, if my neighbor be a rich man, he may have as much wealth as ever he pleases, it is only a cistern full, it will soon be exhausted; but a Christian has a fountain that ever flows, and let him draw, draw on for ever, the fountain will still keep on flowing. However large may be the stagnant pool, if it be stagnant, it is but of little worth; but the flowing stream, though it seem to be but small, needs but time, and it will have produced an immense volume of precious water. Thou art never to have a

great pool of riches, they are always to keep on flowing to thee; "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." As old William Huntingdon says, "The Christian has a hand-basket portion. Many a man, when his daughter marries, does not give her much, but he says to her, 'I shall send you a sack of flour one day, and so-and-so the next day, and now and then a sum of gold; and as long as I live I will always send you something.' Says he, 'She will get a great deal more than her sister, who has had a thousand pounds down.' That is how my God deals with me; he gives to the rich man all at once, but to me day by day." Ah, Egypt, thou wert rich when thy granaries were full, but those granaries might be emptied; Israel was far richer when they could not see their granaries, but only saw the manna drop from heaven, day by day. Now, Christian, that is thy portion—the portion of the fountain always flowing, and not of the cistern-full, and soon to be emptied.

But remember, O saint, that thy wealth does not all lie in thy possession just now; remember thou art rich in *promises*. Let a man be never so poor as to the metal that he hath, let him have in his possession promissory notes from rich and true men, and he says, "I have no gold in my purse, but here is a note for such-and-such a sum—I know the signature—I can trust the firm—I am rich, though I have no metal in hand." And so the Christian can say, "If I have no riches in possession, I have the promise of them; my God hath said, 'No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly,'—that is a promise that makes me rich. He has told me, 'My bread shall be given me, and my water shall be sure.' I cannot doubt his signature, I know his word to be authentic; and as for his faithfulness, I would not so dishonor him as to think he would break his promise. No, the promise is as good as the thing itself.

If it be God's promise, it is just as sure that I shall have it, as if I had it."

But then the Christian is very rich in *reversion*. When a certain old man dies that I know of, I believe that I shall be so immensely rich that I shall dwell in a place that is paved with gold, the walls of which are builded with precious stones. But, my friends, you have all got an old man to die, and when he is dead, if you are followers of Jesus, you will come in for your inheritance. You know who that old man is, he is very often spoken of in Scripture; may the old man in you die daily, and may the new man be strengthened in you. When that old man of corruption, your old nature, shall totter into its grave, then you will come in for your property. Christians are like heirs, they have not much in their minority, and they are minors now; but when they come of age, they shall have the whole of their estate. If I meet a minor, he says, "That is my property." "You cannot sell it, sir; you cannot lay hold of it." "No," says he, "I know I cannot; but it is mine when I am one-and-twenty, I shall then have complete control; but at the same time, it is as really mine now as it ever will be. I have a legal right to it, and though my guardians take care of it for me, it is mine, not theirs." And now, Christian, in heaven there is a crown of gold which is thine today; it will be no more thine when thou hast it on thy head than it is now.

I remember to have heard it reported that I once spoke in metaphor, and bade Christians look at all the crowns hanging in rows in heaven—very likely I did say it—but if not, I will say it now. Up, Christian, see the crowns all ready, and mark thine own; stand thou and wonder at it; see with what pearls it is bedight, and how heavy it is with gold! And that is for thy head, thy poor aching head; thy poor tortured brain shall yet have that crown for its arraying! And see that garment, it is stiff with gems, and white

like snow; and that is for thee! When thy week-day garment shall be done with, this shall be the raiment of thy everlasting Sabbath. When thou hast worn out this poor body, there remaineth for thee, "A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Up to the summit, Christian, and survey thine inheritance; and when thou hast surveyed it all, when thou hast seen thy present possessions, thy promised possessions, thine entailed possessions, then remember that all these were bought by the poverty of thy Saviour! Look thou upon all thou hast, and say, "Christ bought them for me." Look thou on every promise, and see the bloodstains on it; yea, look too, on the harps and crowns of heaven, and read the bloody purchase! Remember, thou couldst never have been anything but a damned sinner, unless Christ had bought thee! Remember, if he had remained in heaven, thou wouldst for ever have remained in hell; unless he had shrouded and eclipsed his own honor, thou wouldst never have had a ray of light to shine upon thee. Therefore, bless his dear name, extol him, trace every stream to the fountain; and bless him who is the source, and the fountain of everything thou hast. Brethren, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

IV. I have not done, I have three things now to say, and I shall say them as briefly as possible.

The first is a *doctrine*; the doctrine is this: If Christ in his poverty made us rich, what will he do now that he is glorified? If the Man of Sorrows saved my soul, will the man now exalted suffer it to perish? If the dying Saviour availed for our salvation, should not the living, interceding Saviour, abundantly secure it?

"He lived, he lives and sits above,  
For ever interceding there;  
What shall divide us from his love,  
Or what shall sink us in despair?"

If when the nail was in thine hand, O Jesus, thou didst rout all hell, canst thou be defeated now that thou hast grasped the sceptre? If, when the thorn-crown was put about thy brow, thou didst prostrate the dragon, canst thou be overcome and conquered now that the acclamations of angels are ascending to thee? No, my brethren, we can trust the glorified Jesus; we can repose ourselves on his bosom; if he was so strong in poverty, what must he be in riches?

The next thing was *a question*, that question was a simple one. My hearer, hast thou been made rich by Christ's poverty? Thou sayest, "I am good enough without Christ; I want no Saviour." Ah, thou art like her of old, who said, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, whereas, saith the Lord, 'Thou art naked, and poor, and miserable.'" O ye that live by good works, and think that ye shall go to heaven because you are as good as others; all the merits you can ever earn yourselves, are good for nothing. All that human nature ever made, turns to a blot and a curse. If those are your riches, you are no saints. But you can say this morning, my hearers, "I am by nature without anything, and God has by the power of his Spirit taught me my nothingness."

My brother, my sister, hast thou taken Christ to be thine all in all? Canst thou say this day, with an unfaltering tongue, "My Lord, my God, I have nothing; but thou art my all?" Come, I beseech thee, do not shirk the question. Thou art careless, heedless; answer it, then, in the negative. But when thou hast answered it, I beseech thee, beware of what thou hast said. Thou art sinful, thou feelest it. Come, I beseech thee, and lay hold on Jesus. Remember, Christ came to make those rich, that have nothing of their own. My Saviour is a physician; if you can heal yourself, he will have nothing to do with you. Remember, my Saviour came to clothe the naked. He will clothe you, if you have not a rag of your own; but unless you let him do it from head to



foot, he will have nothing to do with you. Christ says he will never have a partner; he will do all, or none. Come then, hast thou given up all to Christ? Hast thou no reliance and trust save in the cross of Jesus? Then thou hast answered the question well. Be happy, be joyous; if death should surprise thee the next hour, thou art secure. Go on thy way, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

And now I close with the third thing, which was an *exhortation*. Sinner, dost thou this morning feel thy poverty? Then look to Christ's poverty. O ye that are to-day troubled on account of sin—and there are many such here—God has not let you alone; he has been ploughing your heart with the sharp ploughshare of conviction; you are this day saying, "What must I do to be saved?" You would give all you have, to have an interest in Jesus Christ. Your soul is this day sore broken and tormented. O sinner, if thou wouldst find salvation, thou must find it in the veins of Jesus. Now, wipe that tear from thine eye a moment, and look here. Dost thou see him high, where the cross rears its terrible tree? There he is. Dost see him? Mark his head. See the thorn-crown, and the beaded drops still standing on his temples. Mark his eyes; they are just closing in death. Canst see the lines of agony, so desperate in woe? Dost see his hands? See the streamlets of blood flowing down them. Hark, he is about to speak. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Didst hear that, sinner? Pause a moment longer, take another survey of his person; how emaciated his body, and how sick his spirit! Look at him. But hark, he is about to speak again—"It is finished." What means he by that? He means, that he has finished thy salvation. Look thou to him, and find salvation there. Remember, to be saved, all that God wants of a penitent, is to look to Jesus. My life for this—if you will risk your all on Christ, you shall be saved. I will be Christ's bondsman to-day, to be bound for ever if he

break his promise. He has said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." It is not your hands that will save you; it must be your eyes. Look from those works whereby you hope to be saved. No longer strive to weave a garment that will not hide your sin, throw away that shuttle; it is only filled with cobwebs. What garment can you weave with that? Look thou to him, and thou art saved. Never sinner looked, and was lost. Dost mark that eye there? One glance will save thee, one glance will set thee free. Dost thou say, "I am a guilty sinner"? Thy guilt is the reason why I bid thee look. Dost thou say, "I cannot look"? Oh, may God help thee to look now. Remember, Christ will not reject thee; thou mayest reject him. Remember now, there is the cup of mercy put to thy lip by the hand of Jesus. I know, if thou feelest thy need, Satan may tempt thee not to drink, but he will not prevail; thou wilt put thy lip feebly and faintly, perhaps, to it. But oh, do but sip it; and the first draught shall give thee bliss; and the deeper thou shalt drink, the more of heaven shalt thou know. Sinner, believe on Jesus Christ; hear the whole gospel preached to thee. It is written in God's Word, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Hear me translate it—He that believeth and is *immersed* shall be saved. Believe thou, trust thyself on the Saviour, make a profession of thy faith in baptism, and then thou mayest rejoice in Jesus, that he hath saved thee. But remember not to make a profession till thou hast believed: remember, baptism is nothing, until thou hast faith. Remember, it is a farce and a falsehood, until thou hast first believed; and afterwards, it is nothing but the profession of thy faith. Oh, believe that; cast thyself upon Christ, and thou art saved for ever! The Lord add his blessing, for the Saviour's sake. Amen.

## XXI.

### ON ENDURING PERSECUTION FOR CHRIST.

CALVIN.

[JOHN CALVIN, a chief reformer and theologian—well termed by Dr. Mason “the Paul of the Reformation”—was born at Noyon in Picardy, France, July 10th 1509, and died in Geneva, May 27th 1564. He graduated from the University of Paris, studied law and Greek at Orleans, and became an ardent student of the Scriptures. Converted to the reformed doctrines, he gave up the Roman Catholic chaplaincy conferred on him in his childhood, and eloquently preached the freedom of Gospel salvation. Persecuted in one city, he fled to another, everywhere bearing testimony to the power of God's grace. In his twenty-fifth year, he issued his “Institutes of the Christian Religion,” a masterly statement and vindication of evangelical doctrines as freed from the traditions and perversions of the papal theologians. In 1535 he began his ministerial labors and ecclesiastical rule in Geneva, which continued nearly thirty years, excepting a three years' banishment from 1538. By his firm control Geneva became the stronghold of French Protestantism, a city of refuge from persecution and death for all who longed to worship God with a pure conscience. One of the profoundest theologians, and a most able expositor of the Scriptures, Calvin was also an extremely conscientious, earnest, and abstemious man. His works, in fifty-one volumes, have been published by the Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh. Only four of his Sermons are extant. They have a closeness of thought and homeliness of illustration, above all abounding in inspiring exhortations for each to stand firm as a witness for Gospel truth, at a time when monstrous cruelties were heaped upon Huguenots and Protestants.]

*“Let us go forth out of the tents after Christ, bearing his reproach.”—*  
Hebrews xiii. 13.

ALL the exhortations which can be given us to suffer patiently for the name of Jesus Christ, and in defence of the gospel, will have no effect, if we do not feel assured of the cause for which we fight. For when we are called to part with life, it is absolutely necessary to know on what

grounds. The firmness necessary we cannot possess, unless it be founded on certainty of faith.

It is true that persons may be found who will foolishly expose themselves to death in maintaining some absurd opinions and reveries conceived by their own brain, but such impetuosity is more to be regarded as frenzy than as Christian zeal; and, in fact, there is neither firmness nor sound sense in those who thus, at a kind of hap-hazard, cast themselves away. But however this may be, it is in a good cause only that God can acknowledge us as his martyrs. Death is common to all, and the children of God are condemned to ignominy and tortures just as criminals are; but God makes the distinction between them, inasmuch as he cannot deny his truth. On our part, then, it is requisite that we have sure and infallible evidence of the doctrine which we maintain; and hence, as I have said, we cannot be rationally impressed by any exhortations which we receive to suffer persecution for the gospel, if no true certainty of faith has been imprinted in our hearts. For to hazard our life upon a peradventure is not natural, and though we were to do it, it would only be rashness, not Christian courage. In a word, nothing that we do will be approved of God if we are not thoroughly persuaded that it is for him and his cause we suffer persecution, and the world is our enemy.

Now, when I speak of such persuasion, I mean not merely that we must know how to distinguish between true religion and the abuses or follies of men, but also that we must be thoroughly persuaded of the heavenly life, and the crown which is promised us above, after we shall have fought here below. Let us understand, then, that both of these requisites are necessary, and cannot be separated from each other. The points, accordingly, with which we must commence, are these:—We must know well what our Christianity is, what the faith which we have to hold and follow—what the rule

which God has given us; and we must be so well furnished with such instructions as to be able boldly to condemn all the falsehoods, errors, and superstitions, which Satan has introduced to corrupt the pure simplicity of the doctrine of God. Hence, we ought not to be surprised that, in the present day, we see so few persons disposed to suffer for the Gospel, and that the greater part of those who call themselves Christians know not what it is. For all are as it were lukewarm; and instead of making it their business to hear or read, count it enough to have had some slight taste of Christian faith. This is the reason why there is so little decision, and why those who are assailed immediately fall away. This fact should stimulate us to inquire more diligently into divine truth, in order to be well assured with regard to it.

Still, however, to be well informed and grounded is not the whole that is necessary. For we see some who seem to be thoroughly imbued with sound doctrine, and who, notwithstanding, have no more zeal or affection than if they had never known any more of God than some fleeting fancy. Why is this? Just because they have never comprehended the majesty of the Holy Scriptures. And, in fact, did we, such as we are, consider well that it is God who speaks to us, it is certain that we would listen more attentively, and with greater reverence. If we would think that in reading Scripture we are in the school of angels, we would be far more careful and desirous to profit by the doctrine which is propounded to us.

We now see THE TRUE METHOD OF PREPARING TO SUFFER FOR THE GOSPEL. *First*, We must have profited so far in the school of God as to be decided in regard to true religion and the doctrine which we are to hold; and we must despise all the wiles and impostures of Satan, and all human inventions, as things not only frivolous but also carnal, inasmuch as they corrupt Christian purity; therein differing, like true

martyrs of Christ, from the fantastic persons who suffer for mere absurdities. *Second*, Feeling assured of the good cause, we must be inflamed, accordingly, to follow God whithersoever he may call us: his word must have such authority with us as it deserves, and, having withdrawn from this world, we must feel as it were enraptured in seeking the heavenly life.

But it is more than strange, that though the light of God is shining more brightly than it ever did before, there is a lamentable want of zeal! If the thought does not fill us with shame, so much the worse. For we must shortly come before the great Judge, where the iniquity which we endeavor to hide will be brought forward with such upbraidings, that we shall be utterly confounded. For, if we are obliged to bear testimony to God, according to the measure of the knowledge which he has given us, to what is it owing, I would ask, that we are so cold and timorous in entering into battle, seeing that God has so fully manifested himself at this time, that he may be said to have opened to us and displayed before us the great treasures of his secrets? May it not be said that we do not think we have to do with God? For had we any regard to his majesty we would not dare to turn the doctrine which proceeds from his mouth into some kind of philosophic speculation. In short, it is impossible to deny that it is to our great shame, not to say fearful condemnation, that we have so well known the truth of God, and have so little courage to maintain it!

Above all, when we look to the Martyrs of past times, well may we detest our own cowardice! The greater part of those were not persons much versed in Holy Scripture, so as to be able to dispute on all subjects. They knew that there was one God, whom they behoved to worship and serve—that they had been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, in order that they might place their confidence of salvation in him and in his grace—and that, all the inventions

of men being mere dross and rubbish, they ought to condemn all idolatries and superstitions. In one word, their theology was in substance this,—There is one God who created all the world, and declared his will to us by Moses and the Prophets, and finally by Jesus Christ and his Apostles; and we have one sole Redeemer, who purchased us by his blood, and by whose grace we hope to be saved: All the idols of the world are cursed, and deserve execration.

With a system embracing no other points than these, they went boldly to the flames, or to any other kind of death. They did not go in twos or threes, but in such bands, that the number of those who fell by the hands of tyrants is almost infinite! We, on our part, are such learned clerks, that none can be more so (so at least we think), and, in fact, so far as regards the knowledge of Scripture, God has so spread it out before us, that no former age was ever so highly favored. Still, after all, there is scarcely a particle of zeal. When men manifest such indifference, it looks as if they were bent on provoking the vengeance of God.

What then should be done in order to inspire our breasts with true courage? We have, in the first place, to consider how precious the Confession of our Faith is in the sight of God. We little know how much God prizes it, if our life, which is nothing, is valued by us more highly. When it is so, we manifest a marvellous degree of stupidity. We cannot save our life at the expense of our confession, without acknowledging that we hold it in higher estimation than the honor of God and the salvation of our souls.

A heathen could say, that "It was a miserable thing to save life by giving up the only things which made life desirable!" And yet he and others like him never knew for what end men are placed in the world, and why they live in it. It is true they knew enough to say that men ought to follow virtue, to conduct themselves honestly and without reproach; but all their virtues were mere paint and smoke.

We know far better what the chief aim of life should be, namely, to glorify God, in order that he may be our glory. When this is not done, woe to us! And we cannot continue to live for a single moment upon the earth without heaping additional curses on our heads. Still we are not ashamed to purchase some few days to languish here below, renouncing the eternal kingdom by separating ourselves from him by whose energy we are sustained in life.

Were we to ask the most ignorant, not to say the most brutish persons in the world, Why they live? they would not venture to answer simply, that it is to eat, and drink, and sleep; for all know that they have been created for a higher and holier end. And what end can we find if it be not to honor God, and allow ourselves to be governed by him, like children by a good parent; so that after we have finished the journey of this corruptible life, we may be received into his eternal inheritance? Such is the principal, indeed the sole end. When we do not take it into account, and are intent on a brutish life, which is worse than a thousand deaths, what can we allege for our excuse? To live and not know why, is unnatural. To reject the causes for which we live, under the influence of a foolish longing for a respite of some few days, during which we are to live in the world, while separated from God—I know not how to name such infatuation and madness!

But as persecution is always harsh and bitter, let us consider, *HOW AND BY WHAT MEANS* CHRISTIANS MAY BE ABLE TO FORTIFY THEMSELVES WITH PATIENCE, SO AS UNFLINCHINGLY TO EXPOSE THEIR LIFE FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD. The text which we have read out, when it is properly understood, is sufficient to induce us to do so. The Apostle says, "Let us go forth from the city after the Lord Jesus, bearing his reproach." In the first place, he reminds us, although the swords should not be drawn over us nor the fires kindled to burn us, that we cannot be truly united to the Son of God



while we are rooted in this world. Wherefore, a Christian, even in repose, must always have one foot lifted to march to battle, and not only so, but he must have his affections withdrawn from the world, although his body is dwelling in it. Grant that this at first sight seems to us hard, still we must be satisfied with the words of St. Paul (1 Thess. iii. 3), "We are called and appointed to suffer." As if he had said, Such is our condition as Christians; this is the road by which we must go, if we would follow Christ.

Meanwhile, to solace our infirmity and mitigate the vexation and sorrow which persecution might cause us, a good reward is held forth: In suffering for the cause of God, we are walking step by step after the Son of God, and have him for our guide. Were it simply said, that to be Christians we must pass through all the insults of the world boldly, to meet death at all times and in whatever way God may be pleased to appoint, we might apparently have some pretext for replying, It is a strange road to go at a peradventure. But when we are commanded to follow the Lord Jesus, his guidance is too good and honorable to be refused. Now, in order that we may be more deeply moved, not only is it said that Jesus Christ walks before us as our Captain, but that we are made conformable to his image; as St. Paul speaks in the eighth chapter to the Romans (Rom. viii. 29), "God hath ordained all those whom he hath adopted for his children, to be made conformable to him who is the pattern and head of all."

Are we so delicate as to be unwilling to endure anything? Then we must renounce the grace of God by which he has called us to the hope of salvation. For there are two things which cannot be separated—to be members of Christ, and to be tried by many afflictions. We certainly ought to prize such a conformity to the Son of God much more than we do. It is true, that in the world's judgment there is disgrace in suffering for the gospel. But since we know

that unbelievers are blind, ought we not to have better eyes than they? It is ignominy to suffer from those who occupy the seat of justice, but St. Paul shows us by his example that we have to glory in scourgings for Jesus Christ, as marks by which God recognises us and avows us for his own. And we know what St. Luke narrates of Peter and John (Acts v. 41), namely, that they rejoiced to have been "counted worthy to suffer infamy and reproach for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Ignominy and dignity are two opposites: so says the world which, being infatuated, judges against all reason, and in this way converts the glory of God into dishonor. But, on our part, let us not refuse to be vilified as concerns the world, in order to be honored before God and his angels. We see what pains the ambitious take to receive the commands of a king, and what a boast they make of it. The Son of God presents his commands to us, and every one stands back! Tell me, pray, whether in so doing are we worthy of having anything in common with him? There is nothing here to attract our sensual nature, but such notwithstanding are the true escutcheons of nobility in the heavens. Imprisonment, exile, evil report, imply in men's imagination whatever is to be vituperated; but what hinders us from viewing things as God judges and declares them, save our unbelief? Wherefore, let the Name of the Son of God have all the weight with us which it deserves, that we may learn to count it honor when he stamps his marks upon us: -If we act otherwise our ingratitude is insupportable!

Were God to deal with us according to our deserts, would he not have just cause to chastise us daily in a thousand ways? Nay more, a hundred thousand deaths would not suffice for a small portion of our misdeeds! Now, if in his infinite goodness he puts all our faults under his foot and abolishes them, and instead of punishing us according to our demerit, devises an admirable means to convert our

afflictions into honor and a special privilege, inasmuch as through them we are taken into partnership with his Son, must it not be said, when we disdain such a happy state, that we have indeed made little progress in Christian doctrine?

Accordingly St. Peter, after exhorting us (1 Peter iv. 15) to walk so purely in the fear of God, as "not to suffer as thieves, adulterers, and murderers," immediately adds, "If we must suffer as Christians, let us glorify God for the blessing which he thus bestows upon us." It is not without cause he speaks thus. For who are we, I pray, to be witnesses of the truth of God, and advocates to maintain his cause? Here we are poor worms of the earth, creatures full of vanity, full of lies, and yet God employs us to defend his truth—an honor which pertains not even to the angels of heaven! May not this consideration alone well inflame us to offer ourselves to God to be employed in any way in such honorable service?

Many persons, however, cannot refrain from pleading against God, or, at least, from complaining against him for not better supporting their weakness. It is marvellously strange, they say, how God, after having chosen us for his children, allows us to be so trampled upon and tormented by the ungodly. I answer: Even were it not apparent why he does so, he might well exercise his authority over us, and fix our lot at his pleasure. But when we see that Jesus Christ is our pattern, ought we not, without inquiring farther, to esteem it great happiness that we are made like to him? God, however, makes it very apparent what the reasons are for which he is pleased that we should be persecuted. Had we nothing more than the consideration suggested by St. Peter (1 Peter i. 7), we were disdainful indeed not to acquiesce in it. He says, "Since gold and silver, which are only corruptible metals, are purified and tested

by fire, it is but reasonable that our faith, which surpasses all the riches of the world, should be tried."

It were easy indeed for God to crown us at once without requiring us to sustain any combats; but as it is his pleasure that until the end of the world Christ shall reign in the midst of his enemies (Psalm cx.), so it is also his pleasure that we, being placed in the midst of them, shall suffer their oppression and violence till he deliver us. I know, indeed, that the flesh kicks when it is to be brought to this point, but still the will of God must have the mastery. If we feel some repugnance in ourselves, it need not surprise us; for it is only too natural for us to shun the cross. Still let us not fail to surmount it, knowing that God accepts our obedience, provided we bring all our feelings and wishes into captivity, and make them subject to him.

When the Prophets and Apostles went to death, it was not without feeling within some inclination to recoil. "They will lead thee whither thou wouldst not," said our Lord Jesus Christ to Peter. (John xxi. 18.) When such fears of death arise within us, let us gain the mastery over them, or rather let God gain it; and meanwhile, let us feel assured that we offer him a pleasing sacrifice when we resist and do violence to our inclinations for the purpose of placing ourselves entirely under his command: This is the principal war in which God would have his people to be engaged. He would have them strive to suppress every rebellious thought and feeling which would turn them aside from the path to which he points. And the consolations are so ample, that it may well be said, we are more than cowards if we give way!

In ancient times vast numbers of people, to obtain a simple crown of leaves, refused no toil, no pain, no trouble; nay, it even cost them nothing to die, and yet every one of them fought for a peradventure, not knowing whether he was to gain or lose the prize. God holds forth to us the

immortal crown by which we may become partakers of his glory: He does not mean us to fight at hap-hazard, but all of us have a promise of the prize for which we strive. Have we any cause then to decline the struggle? Do we think it has been said in vain, "If we die with Jesus Christ we shall also live with him?" (2 Tim. ii. 11.) Our triumph is prepared, and yet we do all we can to shun the combat.

But it is said that all we teach on this subject is repugnant to human judgment. I confess it. And hence when our Saviour declares, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," (Matt. v. 10), he gives utterance to a sentiment which is not easily received in the world. On the contrary, he wishes to account that as happiness which in the judgment of sense is misery. We seem to ourselves miserable when God leaves us to be trampled upon by the tyranny and cruelty of our enemies; but the error is that we look not to the promises of God, which assure us that all will turn to our good. We are cast down when we see the wicked stronger than we, and planting their foot on our throat; but such confusion should rather, as St. Paul says, cause us to lift up our heads. Seeing we are too much disposed to amuse ourselves with present objects, God, in permitting the good to be maltreated, and the wicked to have sway, shows by evident tokens that a day is coming on which all that is now in confusion will be reduced to order. If the period seems distant, let us run to the remedy, and not flatter ourselves in our sin; for it is certain that we have no faith if we cannot carry our views forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

To leave no means which may be fitted to stimulate us unemployed, God sets before us PROMISES on the one hand, and THREATENINGS on the other. Do we feel that the promises have not sufficient influence, let us strengthen them by adding the threatenings. It is true we must be perverse in the extreme not to put more faith in the promises of God,

when the Lord Jesus says that he will own us as his before his Father, provided we confess him before men. (Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8.) What should prevent us from making the confession which he requires? Let men do their utmost, they cannot do worse than murder us! and will not the heavenly life compensate for this? I do not here collect all the passages in Scripture which bear on this subject: they are so often reiterated that we ought to be thoroughly satisfied with them. When the struggle comes, if three or four passages do not suffice, a hundred surely ought to make us proof against all contrary temptations!

But if God cannot win us to himself by gentle means, must we not be mere blocks if his threatenings also fail? Jesus Christ summons all those who from fear of temporal death shall have denied the truth, to appear at the bar of God his Father, and says, that then both body and soul will be consigned to perdition. (Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 5.) And in another passage he says that he will disclaim all those who shall have denied him before men. (Matt. x. 33; Luke xii. 10.) These words, if we are not altogether impervious to feeling, might well make our hair stand on end! Be this as it may, this much is certain; if these things do not move us as they ought, nothing remains for us but a fearful judgment. (Heb. x. 27.) All the words of Christ having proved unavailing, we stand convicted of gross infidelity.

It is in vain for us to allege that pity should be shown us, inasmuch as our nature is so frail; for it is said, on the contrary, that Moses having looked to God by faith was fortified so as not to yield under any temptation. Wherefore, when we are thus soft and easy to bend, it is a manifest sign, I do not say that we have no zeal, no firmness, but that we know nothing either of God or his kingdom. When we are reminded that we ought to be united to our Head, it seems to us a fine pretext for exemption to say, that we are

men! But what were those who have trodden the path before us? Indeed, had we nothing more than pure doctrine, all the excuses we could make would be frivolous; but having so many examples which ought to supply us with the strongest proof, the more deserving are we of condemnation.

There are two points to be considered. The first is, that the whole body of the Church in general has always been, and to the end will be, liable to be afflicted by the wicked, as is said in the Psalms (Psalm cxxix. 1), "From my youth up they have tormented me, and dragged the plough over me from one end to the other." The Holy Spirit there brings in the ancient Church, in order that we, after being much acquainted with her afflictions, may not regard it as either new or vexatious, when the like is done to ourselves in the present day. St. Paul, also, in quoting from another Psalm (Rom. viii. 36; Psalm xlv. 23), a passage in which it is said, "We have been like sheep to the slaughter;" shows that that has not been for one age only, but is the ordinary condition of the Church, and shall be.

Therefore, on seeing how the Church of God is trampled upon in the present day by proud worldlings, how one barks and another bites, how they torture, how they plot against her, how she is assailed incessantly by mad dogs and savage beasts, let it remind us that the same thing was done in all the olden time. It is true God sometimes gives her a truce and time of refreshment, and hence in the Psalm above quoted, it is said, "He cutteth the cords of the wicked;" and in another passage (Psalm cxxv. 3), "He breaks their staff, lest the good should fall away, by being too hardly pressed." But still it has pleased him that his Church should always have to battle so long as she is in this world, her repose being treasured up on high in the heavens. (Heb. iii. 9.)

Meanwhile, the issue of her afflictions has always been fortunate. At all events, God has caused that though she has been pressed by many calamities, she has never been

completely crushed; as it is said (Psalm vii. 15), "The wicked with all their efforts have not succeeded in that at which they aimed." St. Paul glories in the fact, and shows that this is the course which God in mercy always takes. He says (1 Cor. iv. 12), "We endure tribulations, but we are not in agony; we are impoverished, but not left destitute; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not; bearing everywhere in our body the mortification of the Lord Jesus, in order that his life may be manifested in our mortal bodies." Such being, as we see, the issue which God has at all times given to the persecutions of his Church, we ought to take courage, knowing that our forefathers, who were frail men like ourselves, always had the victory over their enemies, by remaining firm in endurance.

I only touch on this article briefly to come to the *second*, which is more to our purpose, viz., that WE OUGHT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PARTICULAR EXAMPLES OF THE MARTYRS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US. These are not confined to two or three, but are, as the Apostle says (Heb. xii. 1), "a great and dense cloud." By this expression he intimates that the number is so great that it ought as it were completely to engross our sight. Not to be tedious, I will only mention the Jews, who were persecuted for the true Religion, as well under the tyranny of King Antiochus as a little after his death. We cannot allege that the number of sufferers was small, for it formed as it were a large army of martyrs. We cannot say that it consisted of prophets whom God had set apart from common people; for women and young children formed part of the band. We cannot say that they got off at a cheap rate, for they were tortured as cruelly as it was possible to be. Accordingly, we hear what the Apostle says (Heb. xi. 35), "Some were stretched out like drums, not caring to be delivered, that they might obtain a better resurrection; others were proved by mockery and blows, or



bonds and prisons; others were stoned or sawn asunder; others travelled up and down, wandering among mountains and caves."

Let us now compare their case with ours. If they so endured for the truth which was at that time so obscure, what ought we to do in the clear light which is now shining? God speaks to us with open mouth; the great gate of the kingdom of heaven has been opened, and Jesus Christ calls us to himself, after having come down to us that we might have him as it were present to our eyes. What a reproach would it be to us to have less zeal in suffering for the Gospel, than those had who only hailed the promises afar off—who had only a little wicket opened, whereby to come to the kingdom of God, and who had only some memorial and type of Jesus Christ? These things cannot be expressed in word as they deserve, and therefore I leave each to ponder them for himself.

The doctrine now laid down, as it is general, ought to be carried into practice by all Christians, each applying it to his own use according as may be necessary. This I say, in order that those who do not see themselves in apparent danger may not think it superfluous as regards them. They are not at this hour in the hands of tyrants, but how do they know what God means to do with them hereafter? We ought therefore to be so forearmed; that if some Persecution which we did not expect arrives, we may not be taken unawares. But I much fear that there are many deaf ears in regard to this subject. So far are those who are sheltered and at their ease from preparing to suffer death when need shall be, that they do not even trouble themselves about serving God in their lives. It nevertheless continues true that this preparation for persecution ought to be our ordinary study, and especially in the times in which we live.

Those, again, whom God calls to suffer for the testimony of his Name, ought to show by deeds that they have been

thoroughly trained to patient endurance. Then ought they to recall to mind all the exhortations which were given them in times past, and bestir themselves just as the soldier rushes to arms when the trumpet sounds. But how different is the result! The only question is how to find out subterfuges for escaping. I say this in regard to the greater part; for persecution is a true touchstone by which God ascertains who are his. And few are so faithful as to be prepared to meet death boldly.

It is a kind of monstrous thing, that persons who make a boast of having heard a little of the gospel, can venture to open their lips to give utterance to such quibbling. Some will say, What do we gain by confessing our faith to obstinate people who have deliberately resolved to fight against God? Is not this to cast pearls before swine? As if Jesus Christ had not distinctly declared (Matt. viii. 38), that he wishes to be confessed among the perverse and malignant. If they are not instructed thereby, they will at all events remain confounded; and hence confession is an odor of a sweet smell before God, even though it be deadly to the reprobate. There are some who say, What will our death profit? Will it not rather prove an offence? As if God had left them the choice of dying when they should see it good and find the occasion opportune. On the contrary, we approve our obedience by leaving in his hand the profit which is to accrue from our death.

In the *first* place, then, the Christian man, wherever he may be, must resolve, notwithstanding of dangers or threatenings, to walk in simplicity as God has commanded. Let him guard as much as he can against the ravening of the wolves, but let it not be with carnal craftiness. Above all, let him place his life in the hands of God. Has he done so? Then if he happens to fall into the hands of the enemy, let him think that God, having so arranged, is pleased to have him for one of the witnesses of his Son, and there

fore that he has no means of drawing back without breaking faith with him to whom we have promised all duty in life and in death—him whose we are and to whom we belong, even though we should have made no promise.

In saying this I do not lay all under the necessity of making a full and entire Confession of everything which they believe, even should they be required to do so. I am aware also of the measure observed by St. Paul, although no man was ever more determined boldly to maintain the cause of the gospel as he ought. And hence it is not without cause our Lord promises to give us, on such an occasion, "a mouth and wisdom" (Luke xxi. 15); as if he had said, that the office of the Holy Spirit is not only to strengthen us to be bold and valiant, but also to give us prudence and discretion, to guide us in the course which it will be expedient to take.

The substance of the whole is, that those who are in such distress are to ask and obtain such prudence from above, not following their own carnal wisdom, in searching out for a kind of loop-holes by which to escape. There are some who tell us that our Lord himself gave no answer to those who interrogated him. But I rejoin, *First*, That this does not abolish the rule which he has given us to make Confession of our Faith when so required. (1 Peter iii. 15.) *Secondly*, That he never used any disguise to save his life: and, *Thirdly*, That he never gave an answer so ambiguous, as not to embody a sufficient testimony to all that he had to say; and that, moreover, he had already satisfied those who came to interrogate him anew, with the view not of obtaining information, but merely of laying traps to ensnare him.

Let it be held, then, as a fixed point among all Christians, that they ought not to hold their life more precious than the testimony to the truth, inasmuch as God wishes to be glorified thereby. Is it in vain that he gives the name of WITNESSES (for this is the meaning of the word *Martyr*) to

all who have to answer before the enemies of the faith? Is it not because he wishes to employ them for such a purpose? Here every one is not to look for his fellow, for God does not honor all alike with the call. And as we are inclined so to look, we must be the more on our guard against it. Peter having heard from the lips of our Lord Jesus (John xxi. 18), that he should be led in his old age where he would not, asked, What was to become of his companion John? There is not one amongst us who would not readily have put the same question; for the thought which instantly rises in our minds is, Why do I suffer rather than others? On the contrary, Jesus Christ exhorts all of us in common, and each of us in particular, to hold ourselves "ready" in order that according as he shall call this one or that one, we may march forth in our turn.

I explained above how little prepared we shall be to suffer martyrdom, if we be not armed with the divine PROMISES. It now remains to show somewhat more fully what the purport and aim of these promises are—not to specify them all in detail, but to show the principal things which God wishes us to hope from him, to console us in our afflictions. Now these things, taken summarily, are three. The *first is, that inasmuch as our life and death are in his hand, he will so preserve us by his might that not a hair will be plucked out of our heads without his leave.* Believers, therefore, ought to feel assured into whatever hands they may fall, that God is not divested of the guardianship which he exercises over their persons. Were such a persuasion well imprinted on our hearts, we should be delivered from the greater part of the doubts and perplexities which torment us and obstruct us in our duty.

We see tyrants let loose: thereupon it seems to us that God no longer possesses any means of saving us, and we are tempted to provide for our own affairs as if nothing more were to be expected from him. On the contrary, his

Providence, as he unfolds it, ought to be regarded by us as an impregnable fortress. Let us labor, then, to learn the full import of the expression, that our bodies are in the hands of him who created them. For this reason he has sometimes delivered his people in a miraculous manner, and beyond all human expectation, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, from the fiery furnace, Daniel from the den of lions, Peter from Herod's prison, where he was locked in, chained, and guarded so closely. By these examples he meant to testify that he holds our enemies in check, although it may not seem so, and has power to withdraw us from the midst of death when he pleases: Not that he always does it; but in reserving authority to himself to dispose of us for life and for death, he would have us to feel fully assured that he has us under his charge; so that whatever tyrants attempt, and with whatever fury they may rush against us, it belongs to him alone to order our life.

If he permits tyrants to slay us, it is not because our life is not dear to him, and in greater honor an hundred times than it deserves. Such being the case, having declared by the mouth of David (Psalm cxvi. 13), that the death of the saints is precious in his sight, he says also by the mouth of Isaiah (xxvi. 21), that the earth will discover the blood which seems to be concealed. Let the enemies of the gospel, then, be as prodigal as they will of the blood of Martyrs, they shall have to render a fearful account of it even to its last drop! In the present day, they indulge in proud derision while consigning believers to the flames; and after having bathed in their blood, they are intoxicated by it to such a degree as to count all the murders which they commit mere festive sport. But if we have patience to wait, God will show in the end that it is not in vain he has taxed our life at so high a value. Meanwhile, let it not offend us that it seems to confirm the gospel, which in worth surpasses heaven and earth!

To be better assured that God does not leave us as it were forsaken in the hands of tyrants, let us remember the declaration of Jesus Christ, when he says (Acts ix. 4) that he himself is persecuted in his members. God had indeed said before, by Zechariah (Zech. ii. 8), "He who touches you touches the apple of mine eye:" But here it is said much more expressly, that if we suffer for the gospel, it is as much as if the Son of God were suffering in person. Let us know, therefore, that Jesus Christ must forget himself before he can cease to think of us when we are in prison, or in danger of death for his cause; and let us know that God will take to heart all the outrages which tyrants commit upon us, just as if they were committed on his own Son.

Let us now come to the *second* point which God declares to us in his promise for our consolation. It is, that he *will so sustain us by the energy of his Spirit that our enemies, do what they may, even with Satan at their head, will gain no advantage over us.* And we see how he displays his gifts in such an emergency; for the invincible constancy which appears in the martyrs abundantly and beautifully demonstrates that God works in them mightily. In persecution there are two things grievous to the flesh, the Vituperation and insult of men, and the Tortures which the body suffers. Now, God promises to hold out his hand to us so effectually, that we shall overcome both by patience. What he thus tells us he confirms by fact. Let us take this buckler, then, to ward off all fears by which we are assailed, and let us not confine the working of the Holy Spirit within such narrow limits as to suppose that he will not easily surmount all the cruelties of men.

Of this we have had, among other examples, one which is particularly memorable. A young man who once lived with us here, having been apprehended in the town of Tournay, was condemned to have his head cut off if he recanted, and to be burned alive if he continued steadfast to his purpose!

When he was asked, What he meant to do? he replied simply, "He who will give me grace to die patiently for his Name, will surely give me grace to bear the fire!" We ought to take this expression not as that of a mortal man, but as that of the Holy Spirit, to assure us that God is not less powerful to strengthen us, and render us victorious over tortures, than to make us submit willingly to a milder death. Moreover, we oftentimes see what firmness he gives to unhappy malefactors who suffer for their crimes. I speak not of the hardened, but of those who derive consolation from the grace of Jesus Christ, and by this means, with a peaceful heart, undergo the most grievous punishment which can be inflicted. One beautiful instance is seen in the thief who was converted at the death of our Lord. Will God, who thus powerfully assists poor criminals when enduring the punishment of their misdeeds, be so wanting to his own people, while fighting for his cause, as not to give them invincible courage?

The *third* point for consideration in the promises which God gives his Martyrs is, *The fruit which they ought to hope for from their sufferings, and in the end, if need be, from their death.* Now, this fruit is, that after having glorified his Name—after having edified the Church by their constancy—they will be gathered together with the Lord Jesus into his immortal glory. But as we have above spoken of this at some length, it is enough here to recall it to remembrance. Let believers, then, learn to lift up their heads towards the crown of glory and immortality to which God invites them, that thus they may not feel reluctant to quit the present life for such a recompense; and, to feel well assured of this inestimable blessing, let them have always before their eyes the conformity which they thus have to our Lord Jesus Christ; beholding death in the midst of life, just as he, by the reproach of the cross, attained to THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION, wherein consists all our felicity, joy, and triumph!

## XXII.

### JESUS OF NAZARETH.

STANLEY.

[ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D., son of the Bishop of Norwich, was born at Alderley, England, December 13th 1815. A pupil of Dr. Arnold at Rugby, he paused, after winning the highest honors at Oxford, to write a worthy biography of that lamented schoolmaster. While regius professor of ecclesiastical history, Oxford, and honorary chaplain in ordinary to the Queen, he was made Dean of Westminster in 1864, having declined the honorary appointment of Archbishop of Dublin. The Holy Land was visited by him in 1852, and again ten years later as chaplain to the Prince of Wales. This Sermon was preached on Good Friday, 1862, in the encampment by the Spring of Nazareth. Dean Stanley adorns every subject he writes upon with gems of scholarship and thought. His "Sinai and Palestine" should be read by every student of the Bible, as the most vivid and best portraiture of those sacred scenes. Chief among his works are: "Sermons and Essays on the Apostolical Age;" "The Epistle to the Corinthians;" "Lectures on the Eastern Church;" "Lectures on the Jewish Church." Our extract is from "Sermons in the East," reprinted by Porter & Coates, in 1873.]

*"Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'"*—John xix. 19.

WHAT are the lessons of Good Friday? especially of Good Friday in Palestine and in this place? In the words of the text, in the title written on the Cross, the name of Jesus Christ is at that supreme moment of His Last Passion brought together with the recollection of His early years at Nazareth. What are the lessons which they both teach in common?

I. Everywhere the event of Good Friday speaks to us of the universal love of God to His creatures. That is why it is so truly called *Good* Friday. It has its good news as much as Christmas Day or Easter Day. It tells us not only



that God is Love, but that He bears love to every one on earth, however far they may seem to be removed from Him. It was for this that He sent His Son into the world,—it was for this that Christ died. It was by His death, more even than by His life, that He showed how His sympathy extended far beyond His own nation, His own friends, His own family. “I, if I be lifted up” on the Cross, “will draw all men unto me.” It is this which the Collects of this day bring before us. They speak, in fact, of hardly anything else. They tell us how He died that “all estates,” not one estate only, but “*all* estates in His Holy Church,”—that “*every* member of the Church” in its widest sense, not the clergy or the religious only, but every one, in his “several vocation and ministry,” might “truly and godly serve Him.” They pray for God’s mercy to visit not Christians merely, but all religions, however separate from ours,—“Jews, Turks, Heretics, and Infidels,”—in the hope that they may all at last, here or hereafter, be “one fold under one shepherd,” the One Good Shepherd who laid down His life not for the flock of one single fold only, but for the countless sheep scattered on the hills, not of the fold of the Jewish people, or of the Christian Church only, but of all mankind.

This is a truth which comes home to us with peculiar force in Palestine. What is it that has made this small country so famous? What is it that has carried the names of Jerusalem and of Nazareth to the uttermost parts of the earth? It is in one word, “the death of Christ.” Had He not died as He did, His religion,—His name,—His country,—the places of His birth and education and life,—would never have broken through all the bonds of time and place as they have. That we are here at all on this day, is a proof of the effect which His death has had even on the outward fortunes of the world.

This universal love of God in Christ’s death is specially

impressed upon us in Nazareth. What Christ was in His death, He was in His life. What He was in His life, He was in His death. And if we wish to know the spirit which pervades both, we cannot do so better than by seeing what we may call the text of His first sermon at Nazareth. He was in the synagogue. The roll of the Hebrew Scriptures was handed to Him. He unrolled it. His former friends and acquaintance fixed their eyes upon Him to see what He would say. And what were the words which he chose? They were these:—The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” What He said on this text is not described; we are only told that they “marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth.” But what those gracious words were we can well see from the words of the passage itself. “The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him,” first, “to preach the gospel to the poor,” the glad tidings of God’s love to the poor, the humble classes, the neglected classes, the dangerous classes, the friendless, the oppressed, the unthought-for, the uncared-for. The Spirit of God was upon Him, secondly, “to heal the broken-hearted:”—to heal, as a good physician heals, not with one medicine, but with all the various medicines and remedies which Infinite Wisdom possesses, all the fractures and diseases and infirmities of our poor human hearts. There is not a weakness, there is not a sorrow, there is not a grievance, for which the love of God, as seen in the life and death of Christ, does not offer some remedy. He has not overlooked us. He is with us. He remembers us. The Spirit of God was upon Him, thirdly, “to preach deliverance to the captive.” Whatever be the evil habit, or the inveterate prejudice, or the master passion, or the long indulgence,

which weighs upon us like a bondage, He feels for us, and will do His utmost to set us free,—to set at liberty those that are cramped and bruised and confined by the chain of their sins, their weakness, their misfortunes, their condition in life, their difficulties, their responsibilities, their want of responsibilities, their employments, their want of employments. And, fourthly, “The Spirit of God was upon Him,” to “give sight to the blind.” How few of us there are who know our own failings, who see into our own hearts, who know what is really good for us! That is the knowledge which the thought of Christ’s death is likely to give us. That is the truth, which, above all other truths, is likely to set us free. “Lord, that I may receive my sight,” is the prayer which each of us may offer up for our spiritual state, as the poor man whom He met at Jericho did for his bodily eyesight.

For every one of these conditions he died. Not for those only who are professedly religious, but for those who are the least so,—to them the message of Good Friday and of Nazareth is especially addressed. Christianity is, one may almost say, the only religion, of which the Teacher addressed Himself, not to the religious, not to the ecclesiastical, not to the learned world, but to the irreligious, or the non-religious, to those who thought little of themselves and were thought little of by others, to the careless, to the thoughtless, to the rough publican, to the wild prodigal, to the heretical Samaritan, to the heathen soldier, to the thankless peasants of Nazareth, to the swarming populations of Galilee. He addresses Himself now, to each of us, however lowly we may be in our own eyes, however little we think that we have a religious call, however encompassed we are with infirmities; His love is ready to receive, to encourage, to cherish, to save us.

II. I pass to the other lesson which Good Friday teaches us here: It is that, whatever good is to be done in the

world, even though it is God Himself who does it, cannot be done without an effort,—a preparation,—a Sacrifice. So it was especially in the death of Christ,—so it was in His whole life. His whole life from the time when He grew up, “as a tender plant” in the seclusion of this valley, to the hour when He died at Jerusalem, was one long effort,—one long struggle against misunderstanding, opposition, scorn, hatred, hardship, pain. He had doubtless His happier and gentler hours, we must not forget them: His friends at Bethany, His apostles who hung upon His lips, His mother who followed Him in thought and mind wherever He went. But here, amongst His own people, He met with angry opposition and jealousy. He had to bear the hardships of toil and labor, like any other Nazarene artisan. He had here, by a silent preparation of thirty years, to make Himself ready for the work which lay before Him. He had to endure the heat and the cold, the burning sun and the stormy rain, of these hills and valleys. “The foxes” of the plain of Esdraelon “have holes,” “the birds” of the Galilean forests “have their nests,” but “He had” often “not where to lay his head.” And in Jerusalem, though there were momentary bursts of enthusiasm in His behalf, yet He came so directly across the interests, the fears, the pleasures, and the prejudices of those who there ruled and taught, that at last it cost Him His life. By no less a sacrifice could the world be redeemed, by no less a struggle could His work be finished.

In that work, in one sense, none but He can take part. “He trod the winepress alone.” But in another sense, often urged upon us in the Bible, we must all take part in it, if we would wish to do good to ourselves or to others. We cannot improve ourselves, we cannot assist others, we cannot do our duty in the world, except by exertion, except by unpopularity, except with annoyance, except with care and difficulty. We must, each of us, bear our Cross with Him.

When we bear it, it is lightened by thinking of Him. When we bear it, each day makes it easier to us. Once the name of "Christian," of "Nazarene," was an offence in the eyes of the world; now, it is a glory. But we cannot have the glory without the labor which it involves. To "hear His words, and to *do* them," to hear of His death, and to *follow* in the path of His sufferings, this, and this only, as He himself has told us, is to build our house, the house of our life, of our faith, of our happiness, upon a *rock*; a rock which will grow firmer and stronger the more we build upon it, and the more we have to bear. "The rains may descend, and the floods may come, and the winds may blow and may beat upon that house;" but the house will not fall, "for it will have been founded upon the rock."

## XXIII.

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

DWIGHT.

[TIMOTHY DWIGHT, S. T. D., LL.D., a learned and able theologian of the Congregational Church, was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, May 14th 1752. Much of his worth and labors in life were owing to his mother's training—a daughter of the great Jonathan Edwards. At the age of seventeen he graduated with honors from Yale College, acted as a tutor therein for six years, was licensed to preach in 1777, and served the year following as a chaplain in the American army. Pastoral and academic duties, mainly at Greenfield, intervened till his appointment as president of Yale College and professor of theology, in 1795. These duties he discharged with conscientious fidelity till his death, January 11th 1817. To each course of students he preached a series of Sermons, forming a systematic survey of theology. These were first published a half century ago, in five volumes, entitled: "Theology Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons," 173 in all, and deserve a continued popularity. His clearness of thought and soundness of judgment make these profound subjects interesting and instructive to all classes of minds.]

*"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."—Jeremiah x. 23.*

IN this passage of Scripture, the prophet, after uttering a variety of sublime declarations concerning the perfections and providence of God, and the follies and sins of men, exhibits the progress of life as a Way. In this Way, all men are considered as travelling. We commence the journey at our birth; pass on through the several stages of childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, and finish it when we enter eternity. The accommodations, and the fare, are greatly varied among the various travellers. Some find their entertainment plentiful, and agreeable: and some, even luxurious and splendid. Others are slenderly provided with food,

raiment, and lodging; are almost mere sufferers; and literally, *have not where to lay their heads*.

In the mean time, sorrow and disease, dangers and accidents, like a band of marauders, lie in wait for the travellers; and harass, and destroy, a great proportion of their number. Of the vast multitude, who continually walk in the path of life, almost all disappear long before they reach the goal at which it terminates. A very few arrive at the end. Of these, every one, dragging heavily his weary feet over the last division of the road, teaches us, that this part of his progress is only *labor and sorrow*.

A remarkable fact, universally attendant on our journey, is recited in the text. "O Lord," says the deeply humbled prophet, "I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The enterprise is not contrived by ourselves. We are placed in it, and necessitated to accomplish it, by a superior and irresistible hand. It cannot but seem strange, that in such a journey we should originally be prevented from the ability to direct ourselves; and that, while we are compelled to the undertaking, we should be furnished for it in a manner so imperfect. Yet such is unquestionably the fact. Nor is the explanation so difficult, or so unsatisfactory, as we are prone to believe. God originally intended, that all his creatures should be dependent on him for aid, guidance, and protection. Nor can it be rationally supposed, that such a dependence on his perfections and providence is either unreasonable or undesirable. *The Sovereignty of God* which is so clearly and strongly visible in this interesting subject, has ever been questioned, and very often denied, by mankind. To establish this doctrine in the minds of my audience, is the peculiar design of the present discourse. In a sermon, lately delivered in this place on *the decrees of God*, I explained what I intend by the divine Sovereignty. It was then observed, that "the conduct of God is sovereign,

in this sense; that he does according to his will, independently and irresistibly, without giving an account of any of his matters any farther than he pleases; but that he wills nothing without the best reason, whether that reason be disclosed to his creatures, or not; that real glory to himself, and real good to his creation, not otherwise attainable, are universally the object to which his pleasure is directed, whether it respects the existence and motions of an insect, or the salvation of a man." It was remarked, also, at that time, that, in the ordinary sense of the word, *God never acts arbitrarily; and that to say, he wills a thing because he wills it, is to speak without meaning.* All his pleasure, all his determinations, are perfectly wise and good; founded on the best of all reasons, and directed to the best of all purposes. Were he to act in any other manner, his providence would be less wise, and less desirable.

It will not be questioned, that this doctrine is deeply interesting to man. On this life is suspended that which is to come. Consequences, eternal and incomprehensible, will flow from those doctrines, which we adopt in the present world. All our conduct will then be examined; and will either be approved, or condemned. If we have chosen the strait and narrow way prescribed to us, the termination will be happy. If we have preferred *the broad and crooked road*, it will be deplorable.

Few of this audience will probably deny the truth of a direct Scriptural declaration. With as little reason can it be denied, that most of them apparently live in the very manner, in which they would live, if the doctrine were false: or that they rely, chiefly at least, on their own sagacity, contrivance, and efforts, for success in this life, and that which is to come. As little can it be questioned, that such self-confidence is a guide eminently dangerous and deceitful. Safe as we may feel under its direction, our safety is imaginary. The folly of *others* in trusting to themselves *we*



discern irresistibly. The same folly *they* perceive, with equal evidence, in *us*. Our true wisdom lies in willingly feeling, and cheerfully acknowledging, our dependence on God; and in committing ourselves with humble reliance to his care and direction.

With these observations, I will now proceed to illustrate the truth of the doctrine. The mode which I shall pursue will, probably, be thought singular. I hope it will be useful. Metaphysical arguments, which are customarily employed for the purpose of establishing this and several other doctrines of theology, are, if I mistake not, less satisfactory to the minds of men at large, than the authors of them appear to believe. Facts, wherever they can be fairly adduced for this end, are attended with a superior power of conviction; and commonly leave little doubt behind them. On these, therefore, I shall at the present time rely for the accomplishment of my design. In the

1st place, *The doctrine of the text is evident, from the great fact, that the birth and education of all men depend not on themselves.*

The succeeding events of life are derived, in a great measure at least, from our birth. By this event, it is in a prime degree determined whether men shall be princes or peasants, opulent or poor, learned or ignorant, honorable or despised; whether they shall be civilized or savage, freemen or slaves, Christians or Heathen, Mohammedans or Jews.

A child is born of Indian parents in the western wilderness. By his birth he is, of course, a savage. His friends, his mode of life, his habits, his knowledge, his opinions, his conduct, all grow out of this single event. His first thoughts, his first instructions, and all the first objects with which he is conversant, the persons whom he loves, the life to which he addict himself, and the character which he assumes, are all savage. He is an Indian from the cradle: he is an

Indian to the grave. To say, that he could not be otherwise, we are not warranted; but that he is not, is certain.

Another child is born of a Bedouin Arab. From this moment he begins to be an Arabian. *His hand is against every man; and every man's hand is against him.* Before he can walk, or speak, he is carried through pathless wastes in search of food; and roams in the arms of his mother, and on the back of a camel, from spring to spring, and from pasture to pasture. Even then he begins his conflict with hunger and thirst; is scorched by a vertical sun; shrivelled by the burning sand beneath; and poisoned by the breath of the Simoom. Hardened thus through his infancy and childhood, both in body and mind, he becomes, under the exhortations and example of his father, a robber from his youth; attacks every stranger whom he is able to overcome; and plunders every valuable thing on which he can lay his hand.

A third receives his birth in the palace of a British nobleman; and is welcomed to the world as the heir apparent of an ancient, honorable, and splendid family. As soon as he opens his eyes on the light, he is surrounded by all the enjoyments which opulence can furnish, ingenuity contrive, or fondness bestow. He is dandled on the knee of indulgence; encircled by attendants, who watch and prevent alike his necessities and wishes; cradled on down; and charmed to sleep by the voice of tenderness and care. From the dangers and evils of life he is guarded with anxious solicitude. To its pleasures he is conducted by the ever-ready hand of maternal affection. His person is shaped and improved by a succession of masters; his mind is opened, invigorated, and refined, by the assiduous superintendence of learning and wisdom. While a child, he is served by a host of menials, and flattered by successive trains of visitors. When a youth, he is regarded by a band of tenants with reverence and awe. His equals in age bow to his rank; and multitudes, of supe-

rior years, acknowledge his distinction by continual testimonies of marked respect. When a man, he engages the regard of his sovereign; commands the esteem of the senate; and earns the love and applause of his country.

A fourth child, in the same kingdom, is begotten by a beggar, and born under a hedge. From his birth, he is trained to suffering and hardihood. He is nursed, if he can be said to be nursed at all, on a coarse, scanty, and precarious pittance; holds life only as a tenant at will; combats from the first dawns of intellect with insolence, cold, and nakedness; is originally taught to beg and to steal; is driven from the doors of men by the porter or the house-dog; and is regarded as an alien from the family of Adam. Like his kindred worms, he creeps through life in the dust; dies under the hedge, where he is born; and is then, perhaps, cast into a ditch, and covered with earth, by some stranger, who remembers, that, although a beggar, he still was a man.

A child enters the world in China; and unites, as a thing of course, with his sottish countrymen in the stupid worship of the idol Fo. Another prostrates himself before the Lama, in consequence of having received his being in Thibet, and of seeing the Lama worshipped by all around him.

A third, who begins his existence in Turkey, is carried early to the mosque; taught to lisp with profound reverence the name of Mohammed; habituated to repeat the prayers and sentences of the Koran as the means of eternal life; and induced, in a manner irresistibly, to complete his title to Paradise by a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Hindoo infant grows into a religious veneration for the cow; and perhaps never doubts, that, if he adds to this a solemn devotion to Juggernaut, the Gooroos, and the Dewtahs, and performs carefully his ablutions in the Ganges, he shall wash away all his sins, and obtain, by the favor of Brahma, a seat among the blessed.

In our own favored country, one child is born of parents

devoted solely to this world. From his earliest moments of understanding, he hears and sees nothing commended, but hunting, horse-racing, visiting, dancing, dressing, riding, parties, gaming, acquiring money with eagerness and skill, and spending it in gayety, pleasure, and luxury. These things, he is taught by conversation and example, constitute all the good of man. His taste is formed, his habits are riveted, and the whole character of his soul is turned to them, before he is fairly sensible that there is any other good. The question, whether virtue and piety are either duties or blessings, he probably never asks. In the dawn of life he sees them neglected and despised by those whom he most reverences; and learns only to neglect and despise them also. Of Jehovah he thinks as little, and for the same reason, as a Chinese or a Hindoo. *They* pay their devotions to Fo and to Juggernaut: *he*, his to money and pleasure. Thus he lives, and dies, a mere animal; a stranger to intelligence and morality, to his duty and his God.

Another child comes into existence in the mansion of Knowledge and Virtue. From his infancy, his mind is fashioned to wisdom and piety. In his infancy he is taught and allured to remember his Creator; and to unite, first in form, and then in affection, in the household devotions of the morning and evening. God he knows almost as soon as he can know anything. The presence of that glorious being he is taught to realize almost from the cradle; and from the dawn of intelligence, to understand the perfections and government of his Creator. His own accountableness as soon as he can comprehend it, he begins to feel habitually, and always. The way of life through the Redeemer is early, and regularly explained to him by the voice of parental love; and enforced and endeared in the house of God. As soon as possible, he is enabled to read, and persuaded to "search, the Scriptures." Of the approach, the danger, and the mischiefs of temptations, he is tenderly warned.

At the commencement of sin, he is kindly checked in his dangerous career. To God he was solemnly given in baptism. To God he was daily commended in fervent prayer. Under this happy cultivation he grows up, "like an olive tree in the courts of the Lord;" and, green, beautiful, and flourishing, he blossoms; bears fruit; and is prepared to be transplanted by the Divine hand to a kinder soil in the regions above.

How many, and how great, are the differences in these several children! How plainly do they all, in ordinary circumstances, arise out of their birth! From their birth is derived, of course, the education which I have ascribed to them; and from this education spring in a great measure both their character and their destiny. The place, the persons, the circumstances, are here evidently the great things which, in the ordinary course of Providence, appear chiefly to determine what the respective men shall be; and what shall be those allotments which regularly follow their respective characters. As, then, they are not at all concerned in contriving or accomplishing either their birth or their education; it is certain that, in these most important particulars, the way of man is not in himself. God only can determine what child shall spring from parents, wise or foolish, virtuous or sinful, rich or poor, honorable or infamous, civilized or savage, Christian or Heathen.

I wish it to be distinctly understood, and carefully remembered, that "in the moral conduct of all these individuals no physical necessity operates." Every one of them is absolutely a free agent; as free as any created agent can be. Whatever he does is the result of choice, absolutely unconstrained.

Let me add, that not one of them is placed in a situation in which, if he learns and performs his duty to the utmost of his power, he will fail of being finally accepted.

2dly. *The doctrine is strikingly evident from this great*

*fact also ; that the course of life, which men usually pursue, is very different from that, which they have intended.*

Human life is ordinarily little else than a collection of disappointments. Rarely is the life of man such as he designs it shall be. Often do we fail of pursuing, at all, the business originally in our view. The intentional farmer becomes a mechanic, a seaman, a merchant, a lawyer, a physician, or a divine. The very place of settlement, and of residence through life, is often different, and distant, from that which was originally contemplated. Still more different is the success which follows our efforts.

All men intend to be rich and honorable ; to enjoy ease ; and to pursue pleasure. But how small is the number of those who compass these objects ! In this country, the great body of mankind are, indeed, possessed of competence ; a safer and happier lot than that to which they aspire ; yet few, very few are rich. Here also, the great body of mankind possess a character, generally reputable ; but very limited is the number of those who arrive at the honor which they so ardently desire, and of which they feel assured. Almost all stop at the moderate level, where human efforts appear to have their boundary established in the determination of God. Nay, far below this level, creep multitudes of such as began life with full confidence in the attainment of distinction and splendor.

The Lawyer, emulating the eloquence, business, and fame, of Murray or Dunning, and secretly resolved not to slacken his efforts, until all his rivals in the race of glory are outstripped, is often astonished, as well as broken-hearted, to find business and fame pass by his door, and stop at the more favored mansion of some competitor, in his view less able, and less discerning, than himself.

The Physician, devoted to medical science, and possessed of distinguished powers of discerning and removing diseases,

is obliged to walk; while a more fortunate empiric, ignorant and worthless, rolls through the streets in his coach.

The Legislator beholds with anguish and amazement, the suffrages of his countrymen given eagerly to a rival candidate, devoid of knowledge and integrity; but skilled in flattering the base passions of men, and deterred by no hesitations of conscience, and no fears of infamy, from saying and doing anything which may secure his election.

The Merchant often beholds with a despairing eye his own ships sunk in the ocean; his debtors fail; his goods unsold; his business cramped; and himself, his family, and his hopes, ruined: while a less skilful but more successful neighbor sees wealth blown to him by every wind, and floated on every wave.

The crops of the Farmer are stinted; his cattle die; his markets are bad; and the purchaser of his commodities proves to be a cheat who deceives his confidence, and runs away with his property.

Thus the darling schemes and fondest hopes of man are daily frustrated by time. While sagacity contrives, patience matures, and labor industriously executes; disappointment laughs at the curious fabric, formed by so many efforts, and gay with so many brilliant colors; and while the artists imagine the work arrived at the moment of completion, brushes away the beautiful web, and leaves nothing behind.

The designs of men, however, are in many respects not unfrequently successful. The Lawyer and Physician acquire business and fame; the Statesman, votes; and the Farmer, wealth. But their real success, even in this case, is often substantially the same with that already recited. In all plans, and all labors, the supreme object is *to become happy*. Yet, when men have actually acquired riches and honor, or secured to themselves popular favor, they still find the happiness, which they expected, eluding their grasp. Neither wealth, fame, office, nor sensual pleasure can yield such

good as *we* need. As these coveted objects are accumulated; the wishes of man always grow faster than his gratifications. Hence, whatever he acquires he is usually as little satisfied and often less than before.

A principal design of the mind in laboring for these things is *to become superior to others*. But almost all rich men are obliged to see, and usually with no small anguish, others richer than themselves; honorable men, others more honorable; voluptuous men, others who enjoy more pleasure. The great end of the strife is therefore unobtained; and the happiness expected never found. Even the successful competitor in the race utterly misses his aim. The real enjoyment existed, although it was unperceived by him, in the mere strife for superiority. When he has outstripped all his rivals, the contest is at an end: and his spirits, which were invigorated only by contending, languish for want of a competitor.

Besides, the happiness in view was only the indulgence of pride, or mere animal pleasure. Neither of these can satisfy or endure. A rational mind may be, and often is, so narrow and grovelling, as not to aim at any higher good, to understand its nature, or to believe its existence. Still, in its original constitution, it was formed with a capacity for intellectual and moral good, and was destined to find in this good its only satisfaction. Hence, no inferior good will fill its capacity or its desires. Nor can this bent of its nature ever be altered. Whatever other enjoyment, therefore, it may attain; it will, without this, still crave and still be unhappy.

No view of the ever-varying character and success of mankind in their expectations of happiness, and their efforts to obtain it, can illustrate this doctrine more satisfactorily than that of the progress and end of a class of students in this seminary. At their first appearance here they are all exactly on the same level. Their character, their hopes and their



destination are the same. They are enrolled on one list; and enter upon a collegiate life with the same promise of success. At this moment they are plants, appearing just above the ground; all equally fair and flourishing. Within a short time, however, some begin to rise above others; indicating by a more rapid growth a structure of superior vigor, and promising both more early and more abundant fruit.

Some are studious, steadfast, patient of toil, resolved on distinction, in love with science, and determined with unbroken ambition never to be left behind by their companions. Of these a part are amiable, uniform in their morals, excellent in their dispositions, and honorable by their piety. Another part, although less amiable, are still decent, pleasant in their temper, uncensurable in their conduct, and reputable in their character.

Others are thoughtless, volatile, fluttering from object to object, particularly from one scene of pleasure to another, alighting only for a moment, never settling, regardless of everything except the present gratification, and most regardless of their time, their talents, their duty, and their souls.

Others still are openly vicious, idle, disorderly; gamblers, profane, apparently infidels; enemies to themselves, undutiful to their parents, corrupters of their companions, and disturbers of the collegiate peace.

When the class, which these individuals originally constituted, leaves this seat of science; a number of them will always be missing. Some of these have been sent away by the mandate of law; some have voluntarily deserted their education; and some not very unfrequently have gone to the grave. Of those who remain, the character and the prospects have usually become widely different. The original level is broken; and broken for ever.

How different from all this were their parents' expectations and their own!

Still, when they enter the world, they all intend to be rich, honorable, and happy. Could they look into futurity, and discern the events which it will shortly unfold; how changed would be their apprehensions!

One, almost at his entrance into life, knowing but inexperienced, discerning but not wise, urged by strong passions, and secure in self-confidence, pushes boldly forward to affluence and distinction; but, marked as the prey of cunning and the victim of temptation, is seduced from prudence and worth to folly, vice, and ruin. His property is lost by bold speculation, his character by licentiousness, and the man himself by the disappointment of his hopes and the breaking of his heart.

Another, timid, humble, reluctant to begin, and easily discouraged from pursuing, insensible to the charms of distinction, and a stranger to the inspiration of hope, without friends to sustain and without prospects to animate, begins to flag, when he commences his connection with the world, creeps through life because he dares not attempt to climb, and lives and dies, scarcely known beyond the limits of his native village.

A third yields himself up a prey to sloth, and shrinks into insignificance for want of exertion.

A fourth, possessed of moderate wishes, and preferring safety to grandeur, steers of design between poverty and riches, obscurity and distinction, walks through life without envying those who ride, and finds, perhaps, in quiet and safety, in an even course of enjoyment, and in the pleasure of being beloved rather than admired, the happiness which his more restless companions seek from opulence, power, and splendor in vain.

A fifth, cheerful, fraught with hope, and assured by the gayety and bustle, which he sees around him, that the world is filled with good, moves onward to acquire it, without a suspicion of disappointment or danger. At once he is

astonished to find, that men, who look pleasantly on him, are not his friends; that a smile of approbation is no evidence of good-will; and that professions and promises convey to him no assurance of aid or comfort. To be dependent, he soon learns, is to be friendless, and to need assistance, a sufficient reason for having it refused. The business, which he expected to court his acceptance, flies from him; the countenance, on which he reposed, is withdrawn, and the hopes, which he gayly cherished, begin early to wither. Alone, forgotten, unprepared for struggles, and never mistrusting that struggles would be necessary, he is upset by the suddenness and violence of the shock, and either falls into listlessness and stupor, or dies of a broken heart.

A sixth, from imbecility of constitution or the malignant power of accident, sickens and expires, when he has scarcely begun to live.

A seventh, with vigorous industry, effort, and perseverance, goes steadily forward to wealth and distinction. Yet even *he* finds the void of his mind unsupplied by real good. He is rich and great, but not happy. That enchanting object, happiness, wrought into such elegance of form and adorned with such brilliant colors, has ever fascinated his mind. Lost in wonder and delight, and gazing with an eager and bewildered eye, he never considered, that in this world the rainbow with all its splendor was only painted on a cloud; and, while he roves from field to field, and climbs from one height to another in pursuit of the fairy vision, is astonished to behold it still retreat before him, and finally vanish for ever.

Were I to ask the youths who are before me, what are their designs and expectations concerning their future life, and write down their several answers; what a vast difference would ultimately be found between those answers, and the events which would actually befall them! To how great a part of that difference would facts, over which they could

have no control, give birth! How many of them will in all probability be less prosperous, rich, and honorable than they now intend: how many, devoted to employments, of which at present they do not even dream; in circumstances, of which they never entertained even a thought; behind those whom they expected to outrun, poor, sick, in sorrow or in the grave.

3dly. *The doctrine is further evident from the fact, that Life does not depend upon man.*

All intend to live, and feel secure of many years: but how often does death frustrate this intention, and dissolve the charm of this security! How many leave the world at an immature age! How many, in the midst of bold projects, sanguine desires, and strenuous exertions! How many asterisks appear with a melancholy aspect even in the younger classes of the triennial catalogue: marking solemnly, to a considerate mind, the termination of parental hopes, and the vanity of youthful designs! Where now are multitudes of those who a little while since lived, and studied and worshipped, here, with fond views of future eminence and prosperity, and with as fair a promise as can be found, of future success, usefulness, and honor?

As we are unable to assure ourselves even of a single day, much more of a long life, it is plain, that our eternal state lies beyond our control. As death finds us, so the judgment will certainly find us. He therefore, who *kills*, as well as *makes alive*, at his pleasure, must of course hold in his hands, only, all our allotments which lie beyond the grave.

I have not called up this doctrine at the present time, for the purpose of entering into any of those metaphysical disquisitions, which restless curiosity, rather than sound wisdom, has commonly founded on it; but on the one hand to give it its proper place in this system of discourses, and on the other to derive from it several practical observations, which, there is reason to hope, may, by the blessing of God, be

useful to those who hear me, especially to those who are students in this seminary.

REMARKS.

1st. *You see here, my young friends, the most solid reasons for gratitude to your Creator.*

God, only, directed that you should be born in this land, and in the midst of peace, plenty, civilization, freedom, learning, and religion; and that your existence should not commence in a Tartarian forest or an African waste. God, alone, ordered that you should be born of parents who knew and worshipped Him, the glorious and eternal Jehovah; and not of parents who bowed before the Lama or the ox, an image of brass or the stock of a tree. In the book of his counsels, your names, so far as we are able to judge, were written in the fair lines of mercy. It is of his overflowing goodness, that you are now here; surrounded with privileges, and beset with blessings, educated to knowledge, usefulness, and piety, and prepared to begin an endless course of happiness and glory. All these delightful things have been poured into your lap, and have come, unbidden, to solicit your acceptance. If these blessings awaken not gratitude, it cannot be awakened by blessings in the present world. If they are not thankfully felt by *you*, it is because you know not how to be thankful. Think what you are, and where you are; and what and where you just as easily might have been. Remember, that, instead of cherishing tender affections, imbibing refined sentiments, exploring the field of science, and assuming the name and character of the sons of God, you might as easily have been dozing in the smoke of a wigwam, brandishing a tomahawk, or dancing round an embowelled captive; or that you might yourselves have been embowelled by the hand of superstition, and burnt on the altars of Moloch. If you remember these things, you cannot but call to mind, also, *who made you to differ* from the miserable beings who have thus lived and died.

2dly. *This doctrine forcibly demands of you moderate desires and expectations.*

There are two modes, in which men seek happiness in the enjoyments of the present world. { “Most persons freely indulge their wishes, and intend to find objects sufficient in number and value, to satisfy them.” A few “aim at satisfaction by proportioning their desires to the number and measure of their probable gratifications.” By the doctrine of the text, the latter method is stamped with the name of wisdom, and on the former is inscribed the name of folly. Desires indulged grow faster and farther than gratifications extend. Ungratified desire is misery. Expectations eagerly indulged and terminated by disappointment, are often exquisite misery. But how frequently are expectations raised, only to be disappointed, and desires let loose, only to terminate in distress! The child pines for a toy: the moment he possesses it, he throws it by, and cries for another. When they are piled up in heaps around him, he looks at them without pleasure, and leaves them without regret. He knew not, that all the good, which they could yield, lay in expectation; nor that his wishes for more would increase faster than toys could be multiplied, and is unhappy at last for the same reason as at first: his wishes are ungratified. Still indulging them, and still believing that the gratification of them will furnish the enjoyment for which he pines, he goes on, only to be unhappy.

*Men* are merely taller children. Honor, wealth, and splendor are the toys for which grown children pine; but which, however accumulated, leave them still disappointed and unhappy. God never designed that intelligent beings should be satisfied with these enjoyments. By his wisdom and goodness they were formed to derive their happiness from Virtue.

Moderated desires constitute a character fitted to acquire all the good which this world can yield. He, who is pre-

pared, *in whatever situation he is, therewith to be content*, has learned effectually the science of being happy, and possesses the alchymic stone, which will change every metal into gold. Such a man will smile upon a stool, while Alexander at his side sits weeping on the throne of the world.

The doctrine of the text teaches you irresistibly, that, since you cannot command gratifications, you should command your desires; and that, as the events of life do not accord with your wishes, your wishes should accord with *them*. Multiplied enjoyments fall to but few men, and are no more rationally expected than the highest prize in a lottery. But a well regulated mind, a dignified independence of the world, and a wise preparation to possess one's soul in patience, whatever circumstances may exist, is in the power of every man, and is greater wealth than that of both Indies, and greater honor than Cæsar ever acquired.

3dly. *As your course and your success through life are not under your control, you are strongly urged to commit yourselves to God, who can control both.*

That you cannot direct your course through the world, that your best concerted plans will often fail, that your sanguine expectations will be disappointed, and that your fondest worldly wishes will terminate in mortification, cannot admit of a momentary doubt. That God can direct you, that he actually controls all your concerns, and that, if you commit yourselves to his care, he will direct you kindly and safely, can be doubted only of choice. Why, then, do you hesitate to yield yourselves and your interests to the guidance of your Maker? There are two reasons, which appear especially to govern mankind in this important concern: they do not and will not realize the agency of God in their affairs; and they do not choose to have them directed as they imagine he will direct them. The former is the result of stupidity; the latter, of impiety. Both are foolish in the extreme, and not less sinful than foolish.

The infinitely wise, great, and glorious Benefactor of the universe has offered to take men by the hand, lead them through the journey of life, and conduct them to his own house in the heavens. The proof of his sincerity in making this offer has been already produced. He has given his own Son to live, and die, and rise, and reign, and intercede for our race. "Herein is love," if there ever was love; "not that we have loved him, but that he has loved us." That he, who has done this, should not be sincere, is impossible. St. Paul, therefore, triumphantly asks what none can answer: "He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Trust, then, his word with undoubting confidence; take his hand with humble gratitude, and with all the heart obey his voice, which you will everywhere hear, saying, "this is the way, walk ye therein." In sickness and in health, by night and by day, at home and in crowds, he will watch over you with tenderness inexpressible. He will "make you lie down in green pastures, lead you beside the still waters, and guide you in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. He will prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies, and cause your cup to run over with blessings. When you pass through the waters of affliction, he will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on you." From their native heavens, he will commission those charming twin-sisters, Goodness and Mercy, to descend and "follow you all your days."

But if you wish God to be your guide and your friend, you must conform to his pleasure. Certainly you cannot wonder, that the infinitely Wise should prefer his own wisdom to yours, and that he should choose for his children their allotments, rather than leave them to choose for themselves. That part of his pleasure, which you are to obey,



is all summed up in the single word, Duty, and is perfectly disclosed in the Scriptures. The whole scheme is so formed as to be plain, easy, profitable, and delightful; profitable in hand, delightful in the possession. Every part and precept of the whole, is calculated for this end, and will make you only wise, good, and happy.

Life has been often styled an ocean, and our progress through it a voyage. The ocean is tempestuous and billowy, overspread by a cloudy sky, and fraught beneath with shelves and quicksands. The voyage is eventful beyond comprehension, and at the same time full of uncertainty, and replete with danger. Every adventurer needs to be well prepared for whatever may befall him, and well secured against the manifold hazards of losing his course, sinking in the abyss, or of being wrecked against the shore.

These evils have existed at all times. The present, and that part of the past which is known to you by experience, has seen them multiplied beyond example. It has seen the ancient and acknowledged standards of thinking violently thrown down. Religion, morals, government, and the estimate formed by man of crimes and virtues, and of all the means of usefulness and enjoyment, have been questioned, attacked, and in various places, and with respect to millions of the human race, finally overthrown. A licentiousness of opinion and conduct, daring, outrageous, and rending asunder every bond, formed by God or man, has taken place of former good sense and sound morals, and has long threatened the destruction of human good. Industry, cunning, and fraud have toiled with unrivalled exertions, to convert man into a savage, and the world into a desert. A wretched and hypocritical philanthropy, also, not less mischievous, has stalked forth as the companion of these ravagers: a philanthropy born in a dream, bred in a novel, and living only in professions. This guardian genius of human interests, this friend of human rights, this redresser of human wrongs,

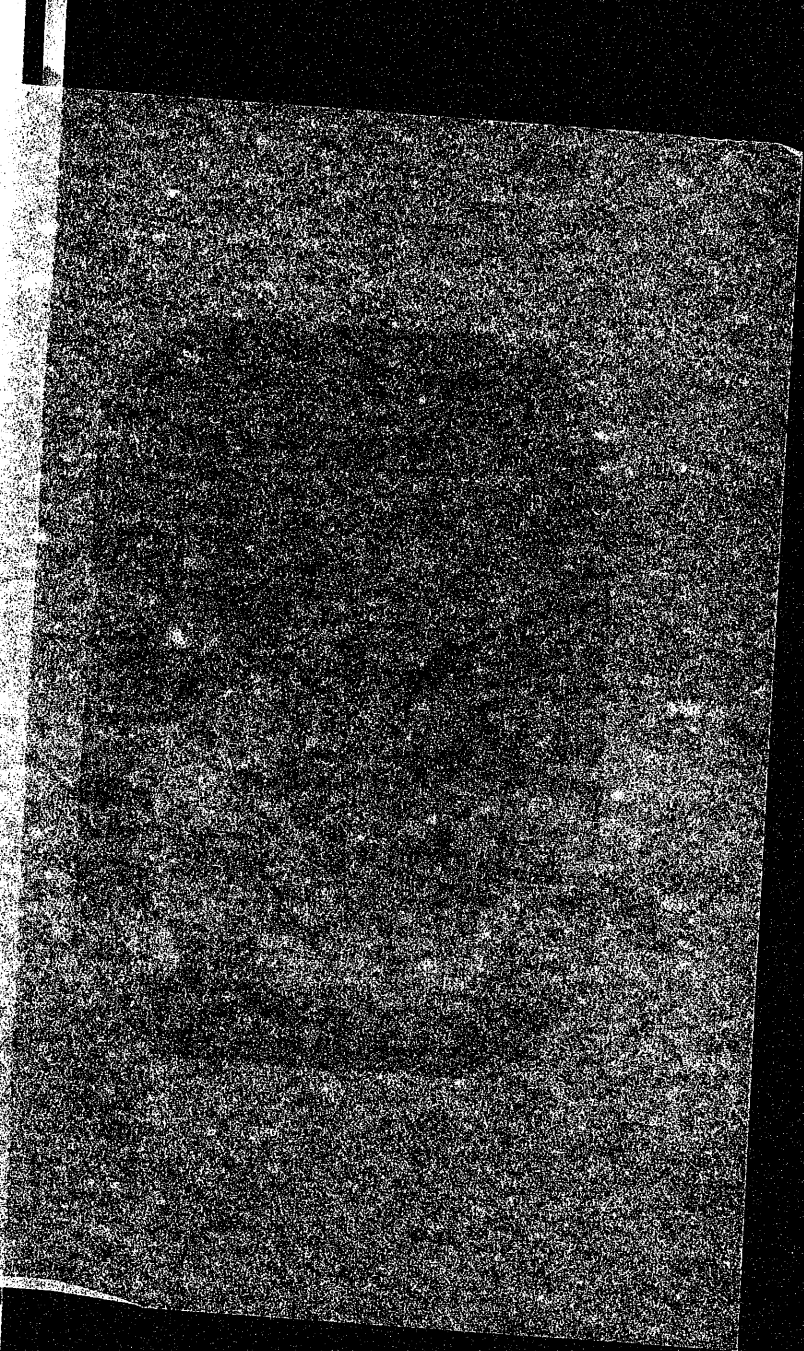
is yet without a heart to feel, and without a hand to bless. But she is well furnished with lungs, with eyes, and a tongue. She can talk, and sigh, and weep at pleasure, but can neither pity nor give. The objects of her attachment are either knaves and villains at home, or unknown sufferers beyond her reach abroad. To the former, she ministers the sword and the dagger, that they may fight their way into place, and power, and profit. At the latter, she only looks through a telescope of fancy, as an astronomer searches for stars invisible to the eye. To every real object of charity within her reach, she complacently says, "Be thou warmed, and be thou filled; depart in peace."

By the daring spirit, the vigorous efforts, and the ingenious cunning, so industriously exerted on the one hand, and the smooth and gentle benevolence, so softly professed on the other, multitudes have been, and you easily may be, destroyed. The mischief has indeed been met, resisted, and overcome; but it has the heads and the lives of the Hydra, and its *wounds*, which at times have seemed *deadly*, are much more readily *healed*, than any good man could wish, than any sober man could expect. Hope not to escape the assaults of this enemy: To feel that you are in danger, will ever be a preparation for your safety. But it will be only such a preparation; your deliverance must ultimately and only flow from your Maker. Resolve, then, to commit yourselves to him with a cordial reliance on his wisdom, power, and protection. Consider how much you have at stake, that you are bound to eternity, that your existence will be immortal, and that you will either rise to endless glory or be lost in absolute perdition. Heaven is your proper home. The path, which I have recommended to you, will conduct you safely and certainly to that happy world. Fill up life, therefore, with obedience to God, with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and repentance unto life, the obedience to the two great commands of the Gospel, with supreme love to God and

universal good-will to men, the obedience to the two great commands of the law. On all your sincere endeavors to honor him, and befriend your fellow-men, he will smile; every virtuous attempt he will bless: every act of obedience he will reward. Life in this manner will be pleasant amid all its sorrows; and beams of hope will continually shine through the gloom, by which it is so often overcast. Virtue, the seed that cannot die, planted from heaven, and cultivated by the divine hand, will grow up in your hearts with increasing vigor, and blossom in your lives with supernal beauty. Your *path* will be that of *the just*, and will gloriously resemble the dawning light, "which shines brighter and brighter, to the perfect day." Peace will take you by the hand, and offer herself as the constant and delightful companion of your progress. Hope will walk before you, and with an unerring finger point out your course; and Joy, at the end of the journey, will open her arms to receive you. You will "wait on the Lord, and renew your strength; will mount up with wings, as eagles; will run, and not be weary; will walk, and not faint."









## XXIV.

### THE FIRST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

KNOX.

[JOHN KNOX, the Reformer of Scotland—"he who never feared the face of man," as the Earl of Morton testified at his burial—was born at Gifford, in 1505. At the age of twenty-five, having graduated at the University of St. Andrew's, he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest. Twelve years later he renounced its communion and preached the Protestant faith. Fearless, sagacious, blunt in speech, and of fiery zeal, he would not be silenced. Persecuted, his life repeatedly in danger from assassins, for two years a wretched prisoner in French galleys, later an exile with Calvin in Geneva, yet he saw with joy the establishment of the Reformed kirk in Scotland, 1560, and wrote a valuable history of the Scottish Reformation. The closing years of his life were full of ardent labors at home, till—"weary of the world," as he said—he sank to rest in Edinburgh, November 24th 1572. His religious writings are published in a volume of the "British Reformers." Only three of his Sermons are preserved.]

*"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, that he should be tempted of the devil."—Matthew iv. 1.*

THE cause moving me to treat of this place of Scripture is, that such as by the inscrutable providence of God fall into divers temptations, judge not themselves by reason thereof to be less acceptable in God's presence. But, on the contrary, having the way prepared to victory by Christ Jesus, they shall not fear above measure the crafty assaults of that subtle serpent Satan—but with joy and bold courage, having such a guide as here is pointed forth, such a champion, and such weapons as here are to be found (if with obedience we will hear, and unfeigned faith believe), we may assure ourselves of God's present favor, and of final victory, by the means of Him, who, for our safeguard and deliverance, entered in the battle, and triumphed over his adversary, and all his raging fury.



And that this being heard and understood, may the better be kept in memory ; this order, by God's grace, we propose to observe, in treating the matter : *First*, What this word temptation meaneth, and how it is used within the Scriptures. *Secondly*, Who is here tempted, and at what time this temptation happened. *Thirdly*, How and by what means he was tempted. *Fourthly*, Why he should suffer these temptations, and what fruit ensues to us from the same.

First. Temptation, or to tempt, in the Scriptures of God, is called to try, to prove, or to assault the valor, the power, the will, the pleasure, or the wisdom—whether it be of God, or of creatures. And it is taken sometimes in good part, as when it is said that God tempted Abraham ; God tempted the people of Israel ; that is, God did try and examine them, not for his own knowledge, to whom nothing is hid, but to certify others how obedient Abraham was to God's commandment, and how weak and inferior the Israelites were in their journey towards the promised land. And this temptation is always good, because it proceeds immediately from God, to open and make manifest the secret motions of men's hearts, the puissance and power of God's word, and the great lenity and gentleness of God towards the iniquities (yea, horrible sins and rebellions) of those whom he hath received into his regimen and care. For who could have believed that the bare word of God could so have moved the heart and affections of Abraham, that to obey God's commandment he determined to kill, with his own hand, his best beloved son Isaac ? who could have trusted that, so many torments as Job suffered, he should not speak in all his great temptations one foolish word against God ? or who could have thought that God so mercifully should have pardoned so many, and so manifest transgressions committed by his people in the desert, and yet that his mercy never utterly left them, but still continued with them, till at length he performed his

promise made to Abraham? Who, I say, would have been persuaded of these things, unless by trials and temptations taken of his creatures by God, they had come by revelation made in his Holy Scriptures to our knowledge? And so this kind of temptation is profitable, good, and necessary, as a thing proceeding from God, who is the fountain of all goodness, to the manifestation of his own glory, and to the profit of the sufferer, however the flesh may judge in the hour of temptation. Otherwise temptation, or to tempt, is taken in evil part; that is, he that assaults or assails intends destruction and confusion to him that is assaulted. As when Satan tempted the woman in the garden, Job by divers tribulations, and David by adultery. The scribes and Pharisees tempted Christ by divers means, questions, and subtleties. And of this matter, saith St. James, "God tempteth no man;" that is, by temptation proceeding immediately from him, he intends no man's destruction. And here you shall note, that although Satan appears sometimes to prevail against God's elect, yet he is ever frustrated of his final purpose. By temptation he led Eve and David from the obedience of God, but he could not retain them for ever under his thralldom. Power was granted to him to spoil Job of his substance and children, and to strike his body with a plague and sickness most vile and fearful, but he could not compel his mouth to blaspheme God's majesty; and, therefore, although we are laid open sometimes, as it were, to tribulation for a time, it is that when he has poured forth the venom of his malice against God's elect, it may return to his own confusion, and that the deliverance of God's children may be more to his glory, and the comfort of the afflicted: knowing that his hand is so powerful, his mercy and good-will so prompt, that he delivers his little ones from their cruel enemy, even as David did his sheep and lambs from the mouth of the lion. For a benefit received in extreme danger more moves us than the preservation from

ten thousand perils, so that we fall not into them. And yet to preserve from dangers and perils so that we fall not into them, whether they are of body or spirit, is no less the work of God, than to deliver from them; but the weakness of our faith does not perceive it: this I leave at the present.

Also; to tempt means simply to prove, or try without any determinate purpose of profit or damage to ensue; as when the mind doubteth of any thing, and therein desires to be satisfied, without great love or extreme hatred of the thing that is tempted or tried. As the Queen of Sheba came to tempt Solomon in subtle questions. David tempted, that is, tried himself if he could go in harness. (1 Sam. xvii.) And Gideon said, "Let not thine anger kindle against me, if I tempt thee once again." This famous queen, not fully trusting the report and fame that was spread of Solomon, by subtle questions desired to prove his wisdom; at the first, neither extremely hating nor fervently loving the person of the king. And David, as a man not accustomed to harness, would try how he was able to go, and behave and fashion himself therein, before he would hazard battle with Goliath so armed. And Gideon, not satisfied in his conscience by the first sign that he received, desired, without contempt or hatred of God, a second time to be certified of his vocation. In this sense must the apostle be expounded when he commands us to tempt, that is, to try and examine ourselves, if we stand in the faith. Thus much for the term.

Now to the person tempted, and to the time and place of his temptation. The person tempted is the only well-beloved Son of God; the time was immediately after his baptism; and the place was the desert or wilderness. But that we derive advantage from what is related, we must consider the same more profoundly. That the Son of God was thus tempted gives instruction to us, that temptations, although they be ever so grievous and fearful, do not separate us from God's favor and mercy, but rather declare the great

graces of God to appertain to us, which makes Satan to rage as a roaring lion ; for against none does he so fiercely fight, as against those of whose hearts Christ has taken possession.

The time of Christ's temptation is here most diligently to be noted. And that was, as Mark and Luke witness, immediately after the voice of God the Father had commended his Son to the world, and had visibly pointed to him by the sign of the Holy Ghost ; he was led or moved by the Spirit to go to a wilderness, where forty days he remained fasting among the wild beasts. This Spirit which led Christ into the wilderness was not the devil, but the holy Spirit of God the Father, by whom Christ, as touching his human and manly nature, was conducted and led ; likewise by the same Spirit he was strengthened and made strong, and, finally, raised up from the dead. The Spirit of God, I say, led Christ to the place of his battle, where he endured the combat for the whole forty days and nights. As Luke saith, "He was tempted," but in the end most vehemently, after his continual fasting, and that he began to be hungry. Upon this forty days and this fasting of Christ do our papists found and build their Lent ; for, say they, all the actions of Christ are our instructions ; what he did we ought to follow. But he fasted forty days, therefore we ought to do the like. I answer, that if we ought to follow all Christ's actions, then ought we neither to eat or drink for the space of forty days, for so fasted Christ : we ought to go upon the waters with our feet ; to cast out devils by our word ; to heal and cure all sorts of maladies ; to call again the dead to life ; for so did Christ. This I write only that men may see the vanity of those who, boasting themselves of wisdom, have become mad fools.

Did Christ fast thus forty days to teach us superstitious fasting ? Can the papists assure me, or any other man, which were the forty days that Christ fasted ? plain it is he fasted the forty days and nights that immediately followed

his baptism, but which they were, or in what month was the day of his baptism, Scripture does not express; and although the day were expressed, am I or any Christian bound to counterfeit Christ's actions as the ape counterfeits the act or work of man? He himself requires no such obedience of his true followers, but saith to the apostles, "Go and preach the gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; commanding them to observe and keep all that I have commanded you." Here Christ Jesus requires the observance of his precepts and commandments, not of his actions, except in so far as he had also commanded them; and so must the apostle be understood when he saith, "Be followers of Christ, for Christ hath suffered for us, that we should follow his footsteps," which cannot be understood of every action of Christ, either in the mystery of our redemption, or in his actions and marvellous works, but only of those which he hath commanded us to observe. But where the papists are so diligent in establishing their dreams and fantasies, they lose the profit that here is to be gathered,—that is, why Christ fasted those forty days; which were a doctrine more necessary for Christians, than to corrupt the simple hearts with superstition, as though the wisdom of God, Christ Jesus, had taught us no other mystery by his fasting than the abstinence from flesh, or once on the day to eat flesh, for the space of forty days. God hath taken a just vengeance upon the pride of such men, while he thus confounds the wisdom of those that do most glory in wisdom, and strikes with blindness such as will be guides and lanterns to the feet of others, and yet refuse themselves to hear or follow the light of God's word. From such deliver thy poor flock, O Lord!

The causes of Christ's fasting these forty days I find chiefly to be two: The first, to witness to the world the dignity and excellence of his vocation, which Christ, after his baptism, was to take upon him openly; the other, to declare

that he entered into battle willingly for our cause, and does, as it were, provoke his adversary to assault him: although Christ Jesus, in the eternal counsel of his Father, was appointed to be the Prince of peace, the angel (that is, the messenger) of his testament, and he alone that could fight our battles for us, yet he did not enter in execution of it, in the sight of men, till he was commended to mankind by the voice of his heavenly Father; and as he was placed and anointed by the Holy Ghost by a visible sign given to the eyes of men. After which time he was led to the desert, and fasted, as before is said; and this he did to teach us with what fear, carefulness, and reverence the messengers of the word ought to enter on their vocation, which is not only most excellent (for who is worthy to be God's ambassador?) but also subject to most extreme troubles and dangers. For he that is appointed pastor, watchman, or preacher, if he feed not with his whole power, if he warn and admonish not when he sees the snare come, and if, in doctrine, he divide not the word righteously, the blood and souls of those that perish for lack of food, admonition, and doctrine, shall be required of his hand.

But to our purpose; that Christ exceeded not the space of forty days in his fasting, he did it to the imitation of Moses and Elias; of whom, the one before the receiving of the law, and the other before the communication and reasoning which he had with God in Mount Horeb, in which he was commanded to anoint Hazael king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet, fasted the same number of days. The events that ensued and followed this supernatural fasting of these two servants of God, Moses and Elias, impaired and diminished the tyranny of the kingdom of Satan. For by the law came the knowledge of sin, the damnation of such impieties, specially of idolatry, and such as the devil had invented; and, finally, by the law came such a revelation of God's will, that no man could justly

afterward excuse his sin by ignorance, by which the devil before had blinded many. So that the law, although it might not renew and purge the heart, for that the spirit of Christ Jesus worketh by faith only, yet it was a bridle that did hinder and stay the rage of external wickedness in many, and was a schoolmaster that led unto Christ. For when man can find no power in himself to do that which is commanded, and perfectly understands, and when he believes that the curse of God is pronounced against all those that abide not in everything that is commanded in God's law to do them—the man, I say, that understands and knows his own corrupt nature and God's severe judgment, most gladly will receive the free redemption offered by Christ Jesus, which is the only victory that overthrows Satan and his power. And so by the giving of the law God greatly weakened, impaired, and made frail the tyranny and kingdom of the devil. In the days of Elias, the devil had so prevailed that kings and rulers made open war against God, killing his prophets, destroying his ordinances, and building up idolatry, which did so prevail, that the prophet complained that of all the true fearers and worshippers of God he was left alone, and wicked Jezebel sought his life also. After this, his fasting and complaint, he was sent by God to anoint the persons aforementioned, who took such vengeance upon the wicked and obstinate idolaters, that he who escaped the sword of Hazeal fell into the hands of Jehu, and those whom Jehu left, escaped not God's vengeance under Elisha.

The remembrance of this was fearful to Satan, for, at the coming of Christ Jesus, impiety was in the highest degree amongst those that pretended most knowledge of God's will; and Satan was at such rest in his kingdom, that the priests, scribes, and Pharisees had taken away the key of knowledge; that is, they had so obscured and darkened God's Holy Scriptures, by false glosses and vain traditions, that neither would they enter themselves into the kingdom of God, nor

suffer and permit others to enter; but with violence restrained, and with tyranny struck back from the right way, that is, from Christ Jesus himself, such as would have entered into the possession of life everlasting by him. Satan, I say, having such dominion over the chief rulers of the visible church, and espying in Christ such graces as before he had not seen in man, and considering him to follow in fasting the footsteps of Moses and Elias, no doubt greatly feared that the quietness and rest of his most obedient servants, the priests, and their adherents, would be troubled by Christ. And, therefore, by all engines and craft, he assaults him to see what advantage he could have of him. And Christ did not repel him, as by the power of his Godhead he might have done, that he should not tempt him, but permitted him to spend all his artillery, and received the strokes and assaults of Satan's temptations in his own body, to the end he might weaken and enfeeble the strength and tyrannous power of our adversary by his long-suffering. For thus, methinks, our Master and Champion, Christ Jesus, provoked our enemy to battle: "Satan, thou gloriest of thy power and victories over mankind, that there is none able to withstand thy assaults, nor escape thy darts, but at one time or other thou givest him a wound: lo! I am a man like to my brethren, having flesh and blood, and all properties of man's nature (sin, which is thy venom, excepted); tempt, try, and assault me; I offer you here a place most convenient—the wilderness. There shall be no mortal to comfort me against thy assaults; thou shalt have time sufficient; do what thou canst, I shall not fly the place of battle. If thou become victor, thou shalt still continue in possession of thy kingdom in this wretched world; but if thou canst not prevail against me, then must thy prey and unjust spoil be taken from thee; thou must grant thyself vanquished and confounded, and must be compelled to leave off from all accusation of the members of my body; for to them appertains the fruit of my



battle, my victory is theirs, as I am appointed to take the punishment of their sins in my body."

O dear sisters, what comfort ought the remembrance of these signs to be to our hearts! Christ Jesus hath fought our battle; he himself hath taken us into his care and protection; however the devil may rage by temptations, be they spiritual or corporeal, he is not able to bereave us out of the hand of the almighty Son of God. To him be all glory for his mercies most abundantly poured upon us!

There remains yet to be spoken of, the time when our Lord was tempted, which began immediately after his baptism. Whereupon we have to note and mark, that although the malice of Satan never ceases, but always seeks for means to trouble the godly, yet sometimes he rages more fiercely than others, and that is commonly when God begins to manifest his love and favor to any of his children, and at the end of their battle, when they are nearest to obtain final victory. The devil, no doubt, did at all times envy the humble spirit that was in Abel, but he did not stir up the cruel heart of Cain against him till God declared his favor towards him, by accepting his sacrifice. The same we find in Jacob, Joseph, David, and most evidently in Christ Jesus. How Satan raged at the tidings of Christ's nativity! what blood he caused to be shed on purpose to have murdered Christ in his infancy! The evangelist St. Matthew witnesses that in all the coasts and borders of Bethlehem the children of two years old and of less age were murdered without mercy. A fearful spectacle and horrid example of insolent and unaccustomed tyranny! And what is the cause moving Satan thus to rage against innocents, considering that by reason of their imperfections, they could not hurt his kingdom at that instant? Oh! the crafty eye of Satan looked further than to the present time; he heard reports by the three wise men, that they had learned, by the appearance of a star, that the King of the Jews was born; and he was not igno-

rant that the time prophesied of Christ's coming was then instant; for a stranger was clad with the crown and sceptre in the kingdom of Judah. The angel had declared the glad tidings to the shepherds, that a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord, was born in the city of David. All these tidings inflamed the wrath and malice of Satan, for he perfectly understood that the coming of the promised Seed was appointed to his confusion, and to the breaking down of his head and tyranny; and therefore he raged most cruelly, even at the first hearing of Christ's birth, thinking that although he could not hinder nor withstand his coming, yet he could shorten his days upon earth, lest by long life and peaceable quietness in it, the number of good men, by Christ's doctrine and virtuous life, should be multiplied; and so he strove to cut him away among the other children before he could open his mouth on his Father's message. Oh, cruel serpent! in vain dost thou spend thy venom, for the days of God's elect thou canst not shorten! And when the wheat is fallen on the ground, then doth it most multiply.

But from these things mark, dear sisters, what hath been the practice of the devil from the beginning—most cruelly to rage against God's children, when God begins to show them his mercy. And, therefore, marvel not, dearly beloved, although the like come unto you. If Satan fume or roar against you, whether it be against your bodies by persecution, or inwardly in your conscience by a spiritual battle, be not discouraged, as though you were less acceptable in God's presence, or as if Satan might at any time prevail against you. No: your temptations and storms that arise so suddenly, argue and witness that the seed which is sown, is fallen on good ground, begins to take root, and shall, by God's grace, bring forth fruit abundantly in due season and convenient time. That is it which Satan fears, and therefore thus he rages, and shall rage against you, thinking that if he can repulse you now suddenly in the beginning, that

then you shall be at all times an easy prey, never able to resist his assaults. But as my hope is good, so shall my prayer be, that so you may be strengthened, that the world and Satan himself may perceive or understand that God fights your battle. For you remember, sisters, that being present with you and treating of the same place, I admonished you that Satan could not long sleep when his kingdom was threatened. And therefore I willed you, if you were in mind to continue with Christ, to prepare yourselves for the day of temptation. The person of the speaker is wretched, miserable, and nothing to be regarded, but the things that were spoken, are the infallible and eternal truth of God; without observation of which, life neither can nor shall come to mankind. God grant you continuance to the end.

This much have I briefly spoken of the temptation of Christ Jesus, who was tempted; and of the time and place of his temptation. Now remains to be spoken how he was tempted, and by what means. The most part of expositors think that all this temptation was in spirit and imagination only, the corporeal senses being nothing moved. I will contend with no man in such cases, but patiently will I suffer every man to abound in his own knowledge; and without prejudice of any man's estimations, I offer my judgment to be weighed and considered by Christian charity. It appears to me by the plain text, that Christ suffered this temptation in body and spirit. Likewise, as the hunger which Christ suffered, and the desert in which he remained, were not things offered to the imagination, but that the body did verily remain in the wilderness among beasts, and after forty days did hunger and faint for lack of food; so the external ear did hear the tempting words of Satan, which entered into the knowledge of the soul, and which, repelling the venom of such temptations, caused the tongue to speak and confute Satan, to our unspeakable comfort and consolation. It

appears also that the body of Christ Jesus was carried by Satan from the wilderness unto the temple of Jerusalem, and that it was placed upon the pinnacle of the same temple, from whence it was carried to a high mountain and there tempted. If any man can show the contrary hereof by the plain Scriptures of God, with all submission and thanksgiving, I will prefer his judgment to my own; but if the matter stand only in probability and opinion of men, then it is lawful for me to believe as the Scripture here speaks. That is, that Satan spake and Christ answered, and Satan took him and carried him from one place to another. Besides the evidence of the text affirming that Satan was permitted to carry the body of Christ from place to place, and yet was not permitted to execute any further tyranny against it, is most singular comfort to such as are afflicted or troubled in body or spirit. The weak and feeble conscience of man under such temptations, commonly gathers and collects a false consequence. For man reasons thus: The body or the spirit is vexed by assaults and temptations of Satan, and he troubles or molests it, therefore God is angry with it, and takes no care of it. I answer, Tribulations or grievous vexations of body or of mind are never signs of God's displeasure against the sufferer, neither yet does it follow that God has cast away the care of his creatures, because he permits them to be molested and vexed for a time. For if any sort of tribulation were the infallible sign of God's displeasure, then should we condemn the best beloved children of God. But of this we may speak hereafter. Now to the temptation.

Verse 2d. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry." Verse 3d. "Then came to him the tempter, and said, If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," &c. Why Christ fasted forty days and would not exceed the same, without sense and feeling of hunger, is before touched upon, that is,

he would provoke the devil to battle by the wilderness and long abstinence, but he would not usurp or arrogate any more to himself in that case than God had wrought with others, his servants and messengers before. But Christ Jesus (as St. Augustine more amply declares), without feeling of hunger, might have endured the whole year, or to time without end, as well as he did endure the space of forty days. For the nature of mankind was sustained those forty days by the invisible power of God, which is at all times of equal power. But Christ, willing to offer further occasion to Satan to proceed in tempting of him, permitted the human nature to crave earnestly that which it lacked, that is to say, refreshing of meat; which Satan perceiving took occasion, as before, to tempt and assault. Some judge that Satan tempted Christ to gluttony, but this appears little to agree with the purpose of the Holy Ghost; who shows us this history to let us understand that Satan never ceases to oppugn the children of God, but continually, by one mean or other, drives or provokes them to some wicked opinions of their God; and to have them desire stones to be converted into bread, or to desire hunger to be satisfied, has never been sin, nor yet a wicked opinion of God. And therefore I doubt not but the temptation was more spiritual, more subtle, and more dangerous. Satan had respect to the voice of God, which had pronounced Christ to be his well-beloved Son, &c. Against this voice he fights, as his nature is ever to do against the assured and immutable word of God: for such is his malice against God, and against his chosen children, that where and to whom God pronounces love and mercy, to these he threatens displeasure and damnation; and where God threatens death, there is he bold to pronounce life; and for this cause is Satan called a liar from the beginning. And so the purpose of Satan was to drive Christ into desperation, that he should not believe the former voice of God his Father; which appears to be the meaning of this temptation: "Thou hast

heard," would Satan say, "a voice proclaimed in the air, that thou wast the beloved Son of God, in whom his soul was well pleased; but mayst thou not be judged more than mad, and weaker than the brainless fool if thou believest any such promise? Where are the signs of his love? Art thou not cast out from comfort of all creatures? Thou art in worse case than the brute beasts, for every day they hunt for their prey, and the earth produces grass and herbs for their sustenance, so that none of them are pined and consumed away by hunger; but thou hast fasted forty days and nights, ever waiting for some relief and comfort from above, but thy best provision is hard stones! If thou dost glory in thy God, and dost verily believe the promise that is made, command that these stones be bread. But evident it is, that so thou canst not do; for if thou couldst, or if thy God would have showed thee any such pleasure, thou mightest long ago have removed thy hunger, and needest not have endured this languishing for lack of food. But seeing thou hast long continued thus, and no provision is made for thee, it is vanity longer to believe any such promise, and therefore despair of any help from God's hand, and provide for thyself by some other means!"

Many words have I used here, dearly beloved, but I cannot express the thousandth part of the malicious despite which lurked in this one temptation of Satan. It was a mocking of Christ and of his obedience. It was a plain denial of God's promise. It was the triumphing voice of him that appeared to have gotten victory. Oh how bitter this temptation was, no creature can understand, but such as feel the grief of such darts as Satan casts at the tender conscience of those that gladly would rest and repose in God, and in the promises of his mercy. But here is to be noted the ground and foundation. The conclusion of Satan is this: Thou art none of God's elect, much less his well-beloved Son. His reason is this: Thou art in trouble and

findest no relief. There the foundation of the temptation was Christ's poverty, and the lack of food without hope of remedy to be sent from God. And it is the same temptation which the devil objected to him by the princes of the priests in his grievous torments upon the cross; for thus they cried, "If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him; he trusted in God, let him deliver him, if he have pleasure in him." As though they would say, God is the deliverer of his servants from troubles; God never permits those that fear him to come to confusion; this man we see in extreme trouble; if he be the Son of God, or even a true worshipper of his name, he will deliver him from this calamity. If he deliver him not, but suffer him to perish in these anguishes, then it is an assured sign that God has rejected him as a hypocrite; that shall have no portion of his glory. Thus, I say, Satan takes occasion to tempt, and moves also others to judge and condemn God's elect and chosen children, by reason that troubles are multiplied upon them.

But with what weapons we ought to fight against such enemies and assaults, we shall learn in the answer of Christ Jesus, which follows: But he, answering, said, "It is written, Man lives not by bread only, but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God." This answer of Christ proves the sentence which we have brought of the aforesaid temptation, to be the very meaning of the Holy Ghost; for unless the purpose of Satan had been to have removed Christ from all hope of God's merciful providence towards him in that his necessity, Christ had not answered directly to his words, saying, "Command that these stones be made bread." But Christ Jesus, perceiving his art and malicious subtilty, answered directly to his meaning, his words nothing regarded; by which Satan was so confounded, that he was ashamed to reply any further.

But that you may the better understand the meaning of

Christ's answer, we will express and repeat it over in more words. "Thou laborest, Satan," would Christ say, "to bring into my heart a doubt and suspicion of my Father's promise, which was openly proclaimed in my baptism, by reason of my hunger, and that I lack all carnal provision. Thou art bold to affirm that God takes no care of me, but thou art a deceitful and false corrupt sophister, and thy argument too is vain, and full of blasphemies; for thou bindest God's love, mercy, and providence, to the having or wanting of bodily provision, which no part of God's Scriptures teach us, but rather the express contrary. As it is written, 'Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.' That is, the very life and felicity of man consists not in the abundance of bodily things, or, the possession and having of them makes no man blessed or happy; neither shall the lack of them be the cause of his final misery; but the very life of man consists in God, and in his promises pronounced by his own mouth, unto which whoso cleaves unfeignedly, shall live the life everlasting. And although all creatures in earth forsake him, yet shall not his bodily life perish till the time appointed by God approach. For God has means to feed, preserve, and maintain, unknown to man's reason, and contrary to the common course of nature. He fed his people Israel in the desert forty years without the provision of man. He preserved Jonah in the whale's belly; and maintained and kept the bodies of the three children in the furnace of fire. Reason and the natural man could have seen nothing in these cases but destruction and death, and could have judged nothing but that God had cast away the care of these his creatures, and yet his providence was most vigilant towards them in the extremity of their dangers, from which he did so deliver them, and in the midst of them did so assist them, that his glory, which is his mercy and goodness, did more appear and shine after their troubles, than it could have done if they had fallen in them. And



therefore I measure not the truth and favor of God, by having or by lacking of bodily necessities, but by the promise which he has made to me. As he himself is immutable, so is his word and promise constant, which I believe, and to which I will adhere, and so cleave, whatever can come to the body outwardly."

In this answer of Christ we may perceive what weapons are to be used against our adversary the devil, and how we may confute his arguments, which craftily, and of malice, he makes against God's elect. Christ might have repulsed Satan with a word, or by commanding him to silence, as he to whom all power was given in heaven and earth; but it pleased his mercy to teach us how to use the sword of the Holy Ghost, which is the word of God, in battle against our spiritual enemy. The Scripture that Christ brings is written in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. It was spoken by Moses a little before his death, to establish the people in God's merciful providence. For in the same chapter, and in certain others that go before, he reckons the great travail and divers dangers with the extreme necessities that they had sustained in the desert, the space of forty years, and yet, notwithstanding how constant God had been in keeping and performing his promise, for throughout all perils he had conducted them to the sight and borders of the promised land. And so this Scripture more directly answers to the temptation of Satan; for thus does Satan reason, as before is said, "Thou art in poverty and hast no provision to sustain thy life. Therefore God takes no regard nor care of thee, as he doth over his chosen children." Christ Jesus answered: "Thy argument is false and vain; for poverty or necessity precludes not the providence or care of God; which is easy to be proved by the people of God, Israel, who, in the desert, oftentimes lacked things necessary to the sustenance of life, and for lack of the same they grudged and murmured; yet the Lord never cast away the providence and care of them,

but according to the word that he had once pronounced, to wit, that they were his peculiar people; and according to the promise made to Abraham, and to them before their departure from Egypt, he still remained their conductor and guide, till he placed them in peaceable possession of the land of Canaan, their great infirmities and manifold transgressions notwithstanding."

Thus are we taught, I say, by Christ Jesus, to repulse Satan and his assaults by the word of God, and to apply the examples of his mercies, which he has shown to others before us, to our own souls in the hour of temptation, and in the time of our trouble. For what God doth to one at any time, the same appertains to all that depend upon God and his promises. And, therefore, however we are assaulted by Satan, our adversary, within the word of God is armor and weapons sufficient. The chief craft of Satan is to trouble those that begin to decline from his obedience, and to declare themselves enemies to iniquity, with divers assaults, the design whereof is always the same, that is, to put variance betwixt them and God, into their conscience, that they should not repose and rest themselves in his assured promises. And to persuade this, he uses and invents divers arguments. Sometimes he calls the sins of their youth, and which they have committed in the time of blindness, to their remembrance; very often he objects their unthankfulness towards God and present imperfections. By sickness, poverty, tribulations in their household, or by persecution, he can allege that God is angry, and regards them not. Or, by the spiritual cross, which few feel and fewer understand the utility and profit of, he would drive God's children to desperation, and by infinite means more, he goeth about seeking, like a roaring lion, to undermine and destroy our faith. But it is impossible for him to prevail against us, unless we obstinately refuse to use the defence and weapons that God has offered. Yea, I say, that God's elect cannot

refuse it, but seek for their Defender when the battle is most strong; for the sobs, groans, and lamentations of such as fight, yea, the fear they have lest they be vanquished, the calling and prayer for continuance, are the undoubted and right seeking of Christ our champion. We refuse not the weapon, although sometimes, by infirmity, we cannot use it as we would. It suffices that your hearts unfeignedly sob for greater strength, for continuance, and for final deliverance by Christ Jesus; that which is wanting in us, his sufficiency doth supply; for it is he that fighteth and overcometh for us. But for bringing of the examples of the Scriptures, if God permit, in the end we shall speak more largely when it shall be treated why Christ permitted himself thus to be tempted. Sundry impediments now call me from writing in this matter, but, by God's grace, at convenient leisure I purpose to finish, and to send it to you. I grant the matter that proceeds from me is not worthy of your pain and labor to read it; yet, seeing it is a testimony of my good mind towards you, I doubt not but you will accept it in good part. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant unto you to find favor and mercy of the Judge, whose eyes and knowledge pierce through the secret cogitations of the heart, in the day of temptation, which shall come upon all flesh, according to that mercy which you (illuminated and directed by his Holy Spirit) have showed to the afflicted. Now the God of all comfort and consolation confirm and strengthen you in his power unto the end. Amen.

## XXV.

### CHRISTIAN HEROISM.

SAURIN.

[JACQUES SAURIN, a gifted and eloquent French Protestant preacher, the son of a Huguenot refugee, was born at Nîmes, January 6th 1677. He studied under able theologians at Geneva. After a few years' ministry to a Walloon (or Belgian) congregation in London, he became pastor at the Hague, Holland. Here he diligently labored the last twenty-five years of his life, doing Gospel service, winning distinction, and meeting envious attacks with patience. He died in 1730. Twelve volumes of his Sermons have been translated into English. This spirited rendering is by the late Rev. Robert Robinson.]

*"He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city."*—  
Proverbs xvi. 32.

WERE we to judge of these words by the first impressions they make on the mind, we should place them among such hyperbolical propositions as imagination forms to color and exceed truth. The mind on some occasions is so struck as to magnify the object in contemplation. The more susceptible people are of lively impressions, the more subject they are to declamation and hyperbole. We find these maxims sometimes necessary in explaining the sacred authors. Were we to adhere scrupulously to their words, we should often mistake their meaning, and extend their thoughts beyond due bounds. The people of the east seldom express themselves with precision. A cloud intercepting a few rays of light is the "sun darkened." A meteor in the air is "the powers of the heavens shaken." Jonah in the belly of the fish, is a man "down at the bottom of the mountains." Thunder is the "voice of Jehovah, powerful and full of majesty, dividing flames of fire, breaking cedars of Lebanon, making Syrians skip, and stripping

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forests bare." A swarm of insects is "a nation set in battle array, marching every one on his ways, not breaking their ranks, besieging a city, having the teeth of a lion, and the cheek teeth of a great lion." Joel i. 6, and ii. 7, 9.

If we be ever authorized to solve a difficult text by examining the license of hyperbolical style; if ever it be necessary to reduce hyperbole to precision, is it not so now in explaining the text before us, "He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city"? What justness can there be in comparing a man who, by reflection, corrects his passions, with an hero, who, in virtue of concerted plans, great fatigues, spending days and nights on horseback, surmounting difficulties, enduring heats and colds, braving a variety of dangers, at last arrives, by marching through a shower of shot darkening the air, to cut through a squadron, to scale a wall, and to hoist his flag in a conquered city?

But, however just this commentary may appear, you will make no use of it here, unless you place Christianity in the exercise of easy virtues, and, after the example of most men, accommodate religion to your passions, instead of reforming your passions by religion. Endeavor to form principles, resist fashion and custom, eradicate prejudice, undertake the conquest of yourself, carry fire and sword into the most sensible part of your soul, enter the lists with your darling sin, "mortify your members which are upon earth," rise above flesh and blood, nature and self-love, and, to say all in one word, endeavor to "rule your spirit;" and you will find that Solomon hath rigorously observed the laws of precision, that he hath spoken the language of logic, and not of oratory, and that there is not a shadow of hyperbole or exaggeration in this proposition, "He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city."

But to what period shall we refer the explication of the text? We will make meditation supply the place of experience, and we will establish a truth, which the greatest

part of you have not experienced, and which perhaps you never will experience. This is the design of this discourse. Our subject is true heroism, the real hero.

I enter into the matter. The word *heroism* is borrowed of the heathens. They called those men heroes, whom a remainder of modesty and religion prevented their putting into the number of their gods, but who, for the glory of their exploits, were too great to be enrolled among mere men. Let us purify this idea: The man of whom Solomon speaks, "he who ruleth his spirit," ought not to be confounded with the rest of mankind; he is a man transformed by grace; one who, to use the language of Scripture, is a "partaker of the divine nature." We are going to speak of this man, and we will first describe him, and next set forth his magnanimity; or, to keep to the text, we will first explain what it is to "rule the spirit," and, secondly, we will prove that "he that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city." If we proceed further, it will only be to add a few reflections, tending to convince you that you are all called to heroism; that there is no middle way in religion; that you must of necessity either bear the shame and infamy of being mean and dastardly souls, or be crowned with the glory of heroes.

I. Let us first explain the words of the text, "to rule the spirit." Few words are more equivocal in the sacred language than this which our interpreters have rendered *spirit*. It is put in different places for the thoughts of the *mind*, the passions of the *heart*, the emotions of *sense*, phantoms of *imagination*, and illusions of *concupiscence*. We will not trouble you with grammatical dissertations. In our idiom, "to rule the spirit" (and this is precisely the idea of Solomon), "to rule the spirit" is never to suffer one's self to be prejudiced by false ideas; always to see things in their true point of view; to regulate our hatred and our love, our desires and our inactivity, exactly accord-

ing to the knowledge we have obtained after mature deliberation, that objects are worthy of our esteem, or deserve our aversion, that they are worth obtaining, or proper to be neglected.

But as this manner of speaking, "to rule the spirit," supposes exercise, pains, labors, and resistance, we ought not to confine ourselves to the general idea which we have given. We consider man in three points of light: in regard to his natural dispositions; in regard to the objects that surround him; and in regard to the habits which he hath contracted.

1. Consider the *natural dispositions* of man. Man, as soon as he is in the world, finds himself the slave of his heart, instead of being master of it. I mean, that instead of a natural facility to admit only what is true, and to love only what is amiable, he feels I know not what interior power, which indisposes him to truth and virtue, and conciliates him to vice and falsehood.

I am not going to agitate the famous question of free-will, nor to enter the lists with those who are noted in the church for the heresy of denying the doctrine of human depravity; nor will I repeat all the arguments, good and bad, which are alleged against it. If there be a subject in which we ought to have no implicit faith, either in those who deny or in those who affirm; if there be a subject, in the discussion of which they who embrace the side of error advance truth, and they who embrace the side of truth advance falsehoods, this is certainly the subject. But we will not litigate this doctrine. We will allege here only one proof of our natural depravity that shall be taken from experience, and, for evidence of this fatal truth, we refer each of you to his own feelings.

Is virtue to be practised? Who does not feel, as soon as he is capable of observing, an inward power of resistance? By *virtue* here, I understand an universal disposition of an

intelligent soul to devote itself to order, and to regulate its conduct as order requires. Order demands that when I suffer, I should submit myself to the mighty hand of God which afflicts me. When I am in prosperity, order requires me to acknowledge the bounty of my benefactor. If I possess talents superior to those of my neighbor, order requires me to use them for the glory of him from whom I received them. If I am obliged to acknowledge that my neighbor hath a richer endowment than I, order requires me to acquiesce with submission, and to acknowledge with humility this difference of endowment; should I revolt with insolence, or dispute through jealousy or self-love, I should act disorderly.

What I affirm of virtue, that it is a general disposition, that I affirm also in regard to an indisposition to sin. To avoid vice is to desist alike from everything contrary to order, from slander and anger, from indolence and voluptuousness, and so on.

He who forms such ideas of the obligations of men, will have too many reasons to acknowledge, by his own inward feelings and experience, that we bring into the world with us propensities hostile and fatal to such obligations. Some of these are in the body; others in the mind.

Some are in the *body*. Who is there that finds in his senses that suppleness and readiness of compliance with a volition, which is itself directed by laws of order? Who does not feel his constitution rebel against virtue? I am not speaking now of such men as brutally give themselves up to their senses, who consult no other laws than the revolutions of their own minds, and who, having abandoned for many years the government of their souls to the humors of their bodies, have lost all dominion over their senses. I speak of such as have the most sincere desire to hear and obey the laws of order. How often does a tender and charitable soul find in a body subject to violence and anger



obstacles against the exercise of its charity and tenderness? How often does a soul, penetrated with respect for the laws of purity, find in a body rebellious against this virtue, terrible obstacles to which it is in a manner constrained to yield?

Disorder is not only in the body; the *soul* is in the same condition. Consult yourselves in regard to such virtues and vices as are, so to speak, altogether spiritual, and have no relation, or a very distant one, to matter, and you will find you brought into the world an indisposition to some of these virtues, and an inclination to the opposite vices. For example, avarice is one of these spiritual vices, having only a very distant relation to matter. I do not mean that avarice does not incline us towards sensible objects, I only say that it is a passion less seated in the material than in the spiritual part of man; it rises rather out of reflections of the mind than out of motions of the body. Yet how many people are born sordid; people always inclined to amass money, and to whom the bare thought of giving, or parting with anything, gives pain; people who prove, by the very manner in which they exercise the laws of generosity, that they are naturally inclined to violate them; people who never give except by constraint, who tear away, as it were, what they bestow on the necessities of the poor; and who never cut off those dear parts of themselves without taking the most affectionate leave of them! Envy and jealousy are dispositions of the kind which we call spiritual. They have their seat in the soul. There are many persons who acknowledge the injustice and baseness of these vices, and who hate them, and who nevertheless are not sufficient masters of themselves to prevent the dominion of them, at least to prevent a repetition of them, and not to find sometimes their own misery in the prosperity of other persons.

As we feel in our constitution obstacles to virtue and propensities to vice, so we perceive also inclinations to error and obstacles to truth. These things are closely connected;

for if we find within us natural obstacles to virtue, we find for that very reason natural obstacles to truth; and if we be born with propensities to vice, we are born on that very account prone to error. Strictly speaking, all ideas of vice may be referred to one, that is to error. Every vice, every irregular passion, openly or tacitly, implies a falsehood. Every vice, every irregular passion includes this error, that a man who gratifies his passion is happier than he who restrains and moderates it. Now every man judging in this manner, whether he do so openly or covertly, takes the side of error. If we be then naturally inclined to some vices we are naturally inclined to some errors, I mean, to admit that false principle on which the irregular passion establisheth the vice it would commit, the desire of gratification. An impassionate man is not free to discern truth from falsehood, at least he cannot without extreme constraint discern the one from the other. He is inclined to fix his mind on whatever favors his passion, changes its nature, and disguises vice in the habit of virtue; and, to say all in one word, he is impelled to fix his mind on whatever makes truth appear false, and falsehood true.

I conclude, the disposition of mind of which Solomon speaks, and which he describes by *ruling the spirit*, supposes labor, constraint, and exercise. A man who would acquire this noble disposition of mind, a man who would *rule his spirit*, must in some sort re-create himself; he finds himself at once, if I may be allowed to say so, at war with nature; his body must be formed anew; his humors and his spirits must be turned into another channel; violence must be done to all the powers of his soul.

2. Having considered man in regard to his natural dispositions, observe him secondly in regard to *surrounding objects*. Here you will obtain a second exposition of Solomon's words, *He that ruleth his spirit*; you will have a second class of evidences of that exercise, labor, and constraint, which true heroism supposes. Society is composed

of many enemies, who seem to be taking pains to increase those difficulties which our natural dispositions oppose against truth and virtue.

Examine the members of this society among whom we are appointed to live, consult their ideas, hear their conversation, weigh their reasonings, and you will find almost everywhere false judgments, errors, mistakes, and prejudices; prejudices of birth, taken from our parents, the nurses who suckled us, the people who made the habits in which we were wrapped in our cradles; prejudices of education, taken from the masters to whom the care of our earlier days was committed, from some false ideas which they had imbibed in their youth, and from other illusions which they had created themselves; prejudices of country, taken from the genius of the people among whom we have lived, and, so to speak, from the very air we have breathed; prejudices of religion, taken from our catechists, from the divines we have consulted, from the pastors by whom we have been directed, from the sect we have embraced; prejudices of friendship, taken from the connections we have had, and the company we have kept; prejudices of trade and profession, taken from the mechanical arts we have followed, or the abstract sciences we have studied; prejudices of fortune, taken from the condition of life in which we have been, either among the noble or the poor. This is only a small part of the channels by which error is conveyed to us. What efforts must a man make, what pains must he take with himself to preserve himself from contagion, to hold his soul perpetually in equilibrium, to keep all the gates of error shut, and incessantly to maintain, amidst so many prejudices, that freedom of judgment which weighs argument against objection, objection against argument, which deliberately examines all that can be advanced in favor of a proposition, and all that can be said against it; which considers an object in every point of view, and which makes us determine only as

we are constrained by the irresistible authority, and by the soft violence of truth, demonstration, and evidence!

As the men who surround us fascinate us by their errors, so they decoy us into vice by their example. In all places and in all ages, virtue had fewer partisans than vice; in all ages and in all places, the friends of virtue were so few in comparison of the partisans of vice, that the saints complained, that the earth was not inhabited by men of the first kind, and that the whole world was occupied by the latter, *the godly man ceaseth*; "the faithful fail from among the children of men. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Psalm xii. 1, and xiv. 2, 3.) An exaggeration of the prophet, I grant, but an exaggeration for which the universality of human depravity hath given too much occasion. Cast your eyes attentively on society, you will be, as our prophet was, astonished at the great number of the partisans of vice; you will be troubled, as he was, to distinguish in the crowd any friends of virtue; and you will find yourself inclined to say, as he said, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

But how difficult is it to resist example, and to *rule the spirit* among such a number of tyrants, who aim only to enslave it! In order to resist example, we must incessantly oppose those natural inclinations which urge us to imitation. To resist example, we must not suffer ourselves to be dazzled either with the number or the splendor of such as have placed vice on a throne. To resist example, we must brave persecution, and all the inconveniences to which worldly people never fail to expose them who refuse to follow them down the precipice. To resist example, we must love virtue for virtue's sake. To resist example, we must transport ourselves into another world, imagine ourselves among those holy societies who surround the throne of a holy God, who

make his excellencies the continual matter of their adoration and homage, and who fly at the first signal of his hand, the first breath of his mouth. What a work, what a difficult work for you, poor mortal, whose eyes are always turned toward the earth, and whom your own involuntary and insurmountable weight incessantly carries downward!

3. Finally, we must acknowledge what labor, pains, and resistance the disposition, of which Solomon speaks, requires, if we consider man in regard to the *habits* which he hath contracted. As soon as we enter into the world we find ourselves impelled by our natural propensities, stunned with the din of our passions, and, as I just now said, seduced by the errors, and carried away by the examples of our companions. Seldom in the first years of life do we surmount that natural bias and that power of example which impel us to falsehood and sin. Most men have done more acts of vice than of virtue; consequently, in the course of a certain number of years, we contribute by our way of living to join to the depravity of nature, that which comes from exercise and habit. A man who would *rule his spirit* is then required to eradicate the habits which have taken possession of him. What a task!

What a task, when we endeavor to prevent the return of ideas, which for many years our minds have revolved! What a task, to defend one's self from a passion which knows all the avenues of the mind, and how to facilitate access by means of the body! What a task, to turn away from the flattering images, and seducing solicitations of concupiscence long accustomed to gratification! What a task, when we are obliged to make the greatest efforts in the weakest part of life, and to subdue an enemy whom we have been always used to consider as unconquerable, and whom we never durst attack, when he had no other arms than what we chose to give him, and enjoyed no other advantages than such as we thought proper to allow! Such labor, such pains and constraint must he experience, who

acquires the art of *ruling his spirit*! Now then, as we have explained this disposition of mind, let us assign the place which is due to him who hath it. Having given an idea of real heroism, we must display the grandeur of it, and prove the proposition in my text, "he that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city."

II. For this purpose it is not necessary to observe that, by *him that taketh a city*, Solomon does not mean a man who, from principles of virtue, to defend his country and religion, hazards his life and liberty in a just war; in this view he that taketh a city and he that ruleth his spirit is one and the same man. Solomon intends conquerors who live, if I may express myself so, upon victories and conquests; he intends heroes, such as the world considers them.

Neither is it necessary precisely to fix the bounds of this general expression, *is better*. "He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city." The sense is easily understood; in general it signifies that *he that ruleth his spirit* discovers more fortitude, more magnanimity, and more courage; that he hath more just ideas of glory, and is more worthy of esteem and praise than they who are called in the world conquerors and heroes.

We will prove this proposition by comparing the hero of the world with the Christian hero; and we will confine the comparison to four articles: First, the motives which animate them; secondly, the exploits they perform; thirdly, the enemies they attack; and lastly, the rewards they obtain. *He that taketh a city* is animated with motives mean and worldly, which degrade an intelligent soul, even while they seem to elevate it to a pinnacle of grandeur and glory; but *he that ruleth his spirit* is animated by motives grand, noble, and sublime, every way suited to the excellence of our nature. *He that ruleth his spirit* is capable of all the exploits of *him that taketh a city*; but *he that taketh a city* is not capable of the exploits of *him that ruleth his*

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1. Let us consider the *motives* which animate a conqueror *that taketh a city*, and the motives which animate a man that obtains *rule over his spirit*; the motives of the true hero with the motives of the false hero. What are the motives of a false hero? What spirit animates him when he undertakes to conquer a city? This is one of the questions which sinful passions have most obscured. Truth is disguised in epistles dedicatory, and in profane eulogiums, yea, sometimes in religious discourses. The majesty of a victorious general, the glory of a conqueror, the pompous titles of victor, arbiter of peace, arbiter of war, have so dazzled us, and in some sort so perverted the powers of our soul that we cannot form just notions of this subject. Hear pure nature, formerly speaking by the mouth of a nation, who were the more wise for not being civilized by the injustice of our laws and customs. I speak of the ancient Scythians. The most famous taker of cities came to their cabins and caverns. He had already subdued his fellow-citizens and neighbors. Already Thebes and Athens, Thrace and Thessaly, had submitted to his arms. Already, Greece being too small a sphere of action for him, he had penetrated even into Persia, passed the famous Phrygian river, where he slew six hundred thousand men, reduced Caria and Judea, made war with Darius and conquered him, performed

exploits more than human, and, in spite of nature, besieged and took Tyre, the most famous siege recorded in ancient history, subjugated the Mardi and Bactrians, attained the mountains Caucasus and Oxus, and, in a word, conquered more countries and enslaved more people than we can describe, or even mention within the limits allotted to this exercise. This man arrives in Scythia. The Scythians sent deputies to him, who thus addressed him: "Had the gods given you a body proportioned to your ambition, the whole universe would have been too little for you: with one hand you would have touched the east, and with the other the west, and not content with this, you would have followed the sun, and have seen where he hides himself. Whatever you are, you are aspiring at what you can never obtain. From Europe you run into Asia, and from Asia back you run again into Europe; and having enslaved all mankind, you attack rivers, and forests, and wild beasts. What have you to do with us? We have never set foot in your country. May not a people living in a desert be allowed to be ignorant of who you are and whence you come? You boast of having exterminated robbers, and you yourself are the greatest robber in the world. You have pillaged and plundered all nations, and now you come to rob us of our cattle. It is in vain to fill your hands, for you are always in search of fresh prey. Of what use are your boundless riches, except to irritate your eternal thirst? You are the first man who ever experienced such extreme want in the midst of such abundance. All you have serves only to make you desire with more fury what you have not. If you be a god, do good to mankind; but if you be only an insignificant mortal, think of what you are, and remember that it is a great folly to occupy things which make us forget ourselves." These are the motives which animate the heroes of the world; these are the sentiments which are disguised under the fine names of glory, valor, greatness of soul, heroism. An insatiable avidity of riches, an invincible pride, a boundless



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ambition, a total forgetfulness of what is, what ought to be, and what must be hereafter.

The motives of him who endeavors to render himself master of his own heart, are love of order, desire of freedom from the slavery of the passions, a noble firmness of soul, which admits only what appears true, and loves only what appears lovely, after sober and serious discussion. In this first view, then, the advantage is wholly in favor of *him that ruleth his spirit*. "He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city."

2. Compare, in the second place, the *exploits of him that ruleth his spirit*, with the exploits of *him that taketh a city*. He who is capable of *ruling his spirit*, is capable of all that is great and noble in *him that taketh a city*: but *he that taketh a city* is not capable of all that is great and magnanimous in *him that ruleth his spirit*. I will explain myself.

What is there great and magnanimous in a hero that taketh a city? Patience to endure fatigue, to surmount difficulties, to suffer contradiction; intrepidity in the most frightful dangers; presence of mind in the most violent and painful exercises; unshaken firmness in sight of a near and terrible dissolution. These are dispositions of mind, I grant, which seem to elevate man above humanity; but a Christian hero is capable of all this, I speak sincerely and without a figure. A man who hath obtained a religious freedom of mind, who always preserves this liberty, who always weighs good and evil, who believes only what is true, and does only what is right; who hath always his eye upon his duty, or as the psalmist expresseth it, who "sets the Lord always before him," such a man is capable, literally capable, of all you admire in a worldly hero. No difficulty discourages him, no contradiction disconcerts him, no fatigue stops him, no dangers affright him, no pain but he can bear, no appearance of death shocks him into paleness, and fear, and flight. Our women and children, our confessors and martyrs, have literally performed greater exploits of fortitude, patience,

courage, and constancy, in convents, prisons, and dungeons, at stakes and on scaffolds, than Alexanders and Cæsars in all their lives. And where is the hero of this world who hath performed so many actions of courage and magnanimity, in sieges and battles, as our confessors have for thirty years on board the galleys? The former were supported by the presence of thousands of witnesses; the latter had no spectators but God and their own consciences. The Christian hero is capable then of all that is great in the hero of the world. But the worldly hero is incapable of performing such exploits as the Christian hero performs; and he knows perfectly that his heroism doth not conduct him so far in the path of glory. Try the strength of a worldly hero. Set him to contend with a passion. You will soon find this man, invincible before, subdued into slavery and shame. He who was firm and fearless in sight of fire and flame, at the sound of warlike instruments, becomes feeble, mean, and enervated by a seducing and enchanting object. Samson defeats the Philistines; but Delilah subdues Samson. Samson carries away the gates of Gaza; but Samson sinks under the weight of his own sensuality. Hercules seeks highway robbers to combat, and monsters to subdue; but he cannot resist impurity. We find him on monuments of antiquity carrying an infant on his shoulders, an emblem of voluptuousness, stooping under that unworthy burden, and letting his club fall from his hand. There is therefore no declamation, no hyperbole in our proposition; the Christian hero is capable of performing all the great actions performed by the hero of the world; but the hero of the world is incapable of performing such noble actions as the Christian hero performs; and in this respect, "he that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city."

3. Compare *him that taketh a city, with him that ruleth his spirit*, in regard to the *enemies* whom they attack, and

you will find in the latter a third title of superiority over the former. *He that taketh a city*, attacks an exterior enemy, who is a stranger and often odious to him. The ambition that fills his soul leaves no room for compassion and pity; and, provided he can but obtain his end, no matter to him though the way be strewed with the dying and the dead: to obtain that he travels over mountains of heads, and arms, and carcasses. The tumultuous passions which tyrannize over him stifle the voice of nature, and deafen him to the cries of a thousand miserable wretches sacrificed to his fame.

The enemy whom the Christian combats is his own heart: for he is required to turn his arms against himself. He must suspend all sentiments of self-love; he must become his own executioner, and, to use the ideas and expressions of Jesus Christ, he must actually *deny himself*.

Jesus Christ well knew mankind. He did not preach like some preaching novices who, in order to incline their hearers to subdue their passions, propose the work to them as free from difficulty. Jesus Christ did not disguise the difficulties which the man must undergo who puts on the spirit of Christianity; and I do not know whether we meet with any expression in the writings of pagan poets or philosophers more natural, and at the same time more emphatical than this: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." Matt. xvi. 24.

Not that this is literally practicable, not that man can put off himself, not that religion requires us to sacrifice to it what makes the essence and happiness of our nature; on the contrary, strictly speaking, it is sin which makes us put off or deny what is great and noble in our essence; it is sin which requires us to sacrifice our true happiness to it. If Jesus Christ expresses himself in this manner, it is because when man is possessed with a passion, it is incorporated, as it were, with himself; it seems to him essential to his

felicity; everything troubles, and everything puts him on the rack when he cannot gratify it; without gratifying his passion, his food hath no taste, flowers no smell, pleasures no point, the sun is dark, society disagreeable, life itself hath no charms. To attack a reigning passion is to *deny self*; and *here is the patience of the saints*; this is the enemy whom the Christian attacks; this is the war which he wageth. How tremulous and weak is the hand when it toucheth a sword to be plunged into one's own bosom! Love of order, truth, and virtue support a Christian hero in this almost desperate undertaking.

4. In fine, Compare *him that ruleth his spirit, with him that taketh a city*, in regard to the *acclamations* with which they are accompanied, and the *crowns* prepared for them. Who are the authors of those acclamations with which the air resounds the praise of worldly heroes? They are courtiers, poets, panegyrists. But what! are people of this order the only persons who entertain just notions of glory? and if they be, are they generous enough to speak out? How can a soul wholly devoted to the will and caprice of a conqueror; how can a venal creature who makes a market of eulogiums and praises which he sells to the highest bidder; how can a brutal soldiery determine what is worthy of praise or blame? Is it for such people to distribute prizes of glory, and to assign heroes their rank? To be exalted by people of this sort is a shame; to be crowned by their hands an infamy.

Elevate, elevate thy meditation, Christian soul, rise into the Majesty of the Great Supreme. Think of that sublime intelligence, who unites in his essence everything noble and sublime. Contemplate God, surrounded with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim. Hear the concerts which happy spirits perform to his glory. Hear them, penetrated, ravished, charmed with the divine beauties, crying night and day, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of



Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" This Being so perfect, this Being so worthily praised, this Being so worthy of everlasting praise, this is he who will pronounce upon true glory; this is he who will compose the eulogium of all who aspire at it; this is he who will one day praise in the face of heaven and earth all those who shall have made the noble conquests which we have been describing.

Imagination sinks under the weight of this subject, and this object is too bright for eyes like ours; but the nature of things doth not depend on our faculty of seeing them. As God calls us to combats more than human, so he sees fit to support us by a prospect of more than human rewards. Yes, it is the Supreme Being, it is he who will one day distribute the praises which are due to such as have triumphed over themselves. What a spectacle! what a prospect! Yes, Christian champion, after thou hast resisted flesh and blood, after thou hast been treated as a fool by mankind, after thou hast run the race of tribulation, after thou hast made thy life one perpetual martyrdom, thou shalt be called forth in the presence of men and angels; the master of the world shall separate thee from the crowd; there he will address to thee this language, *Well done, good and faithful servant*; there he will accomplish the promise which he this day makes to all who fight under his standard, *He that overcometh shall sit down in my throne*. Ah! glory of worldly heroes, profane encomiums, fastidious inscriptions, proud trophies, brilliant but corruptible diadems! what are you in comparison with the acclamations which await the Christian hero, and the crowns which God the rewarder prepares for him?

And you, mean and timid souls, who perhaps admire these

triumphs, but who have not the ambition to strive to obtain them ; you soft and indolent spirits who, without reluctance, give up all pretensions to the immortal crowns which God prepares for heroism, provided he require no account of your indolence and effeminacy, and suffer you, like brute beasts, to follow the first instincts of your nature—undecieve yourselves. I said, at the beginning, you are all called to heroism ; there is no midway in religion ; you must be covered with shame and infamy, along with the base and timid, or crowned with glory in company with heroes. The duty of an intelligent soul is to adhere to truth, and to follow virtue ; we bring into the world with us obstacles to both ; our duty is to surmount them ; without this we betray our trust ; we do not answer the end of our creation ; we are guilty, and we shall be punished for not endeavoring to obtain the great end for which we were created. . . . .

Let us religiously abide by our principle. The duty of an intelligent soul is to adhere to truth and to practise virtue. We are born with a disinclination to both. Our duty is to get rid of this ; and without doing so we neglect the obligation of an intelligent soul ; we do not answer the end for which we were intended ; we are guilty, and we shall be punished for not having answered the end of our creation.

Let us consider ourselves as soldiers placed around a besieged city, and having such or such an enemy to fight, such or such a post to force. You, you are naturally subject to violence and anger. It is sad to find, in one's own constitution, an opposition to virtues so lovely as those of submission, charity, sweetness, and patience. Groan under this evil, but do not despair ; when you are judged, less attention will be paid to your natural indisposition to these virtues than to the efforts which you made to get rid of it. To this point direct all your attention, all your strength, and all your courage. Say to yourself, this is the post which my general intends I should force ; this is the enemy

I am to fight with. And be you fully convinced that one of the principal views which God hath in preserving your life, is, that you should render yourself master of this passion. You, you are naturally disposed to be proud. The moment you leave your mind to its natural bias, it turns to such objects as seem the most fit to give you high ideas of yourself, to your penetration, your memory, your imagination, and even to exterior advantages, which vanity generally incorporates with the person who enjoys them. It is melancholy to find within yourself any seeds of an inclination, which so ill agree with creatures vile and miserable as men. Lament this misfortune, but do not despair; to this side turn all your attention and all your courage and strength. Say to yourself, this is the post which my general would have me force; this is the enemy whom he hath appointed me to oppose. And be fully convinced that one of the principal views of God in continuing you in this world is, that you may resist this passion and make yourself master of it.

Let us, all together, my brethren, endeavor to rule our own spirits. Let us not be dismayed at the greatness of the work, because *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world*. Grace comes to the aid of nature. Prayer acquires strength by exercise. The passions, after having been tyrants, become slaves in their turn. The danger and pain of battle vanish when the eye gets sight of conquest. How inconceivably beautiful is victory then! God grant we may obtain it! To him be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

## XXVI.

### ETERNAL REDEMPTION.

PHILIP.

[ROBERT PHILIP, the distinguished dissenting minister of Maberly Chapel, London, died in 1858, aged sixty-seven years. In this country he is best known by his "Devotional Guides." This spiritual work deserves to be, and bids fair to become, a standard in Christian literature, worthy to be named with Thomas à Kempis' "Imitation of Christ." It comprises: Christian Experience, for the Perplexed; Communion with God, for the Devotional; Eternity Realized, for the Thoughtful; The God of Glory, for the Doubting; Pleasing God, for the Conscientious; and Redemption, the New Song in Heaven. Its thoughts are soul-searching, and its language transparent.]

*"It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."*—Heb. ii. 10.

THERE is, perhaps, nothing we understand better, in the conduct of others, than what is becoming or unbecoming in their spirit and deportment. We are almost eagle-eyed to discover, and eagled-winged to catch, whatever is worthy or unworthy of a man's rank and character. And, in general, we are not far wrong, in these prompt and summary decisions on what is becoming and consistent.

This almost instinctive sense of propriety in human conduct might, if wisely employed, enable us to judge wisely of what is becoming in the Divine conduct. For, if we expect wise, good, and great men to act up to their character and avowed principles, we may well expect that the infinitely wise, great, and good God will do nothing unbecoming his character and supremacy. When, therefore, He says that it "became" him to save sinners, only by the blood of the Lamb, it surely becomes us to search in his character and salvation, not for reasons why redemption could not, or should not, be by atonement; but for reasons why it is so.

Now, upon the very surface of the case, it is self-evident that an infinitely wise God would neither do too much nor too little for the salvation of man. Less than enough would not become his love; more than enough would not become his wisdom.

It is, however, said by some, and suspected by more, that an atonement for sin is unnecessary, and, therefore, untrue; that it would be unjust to lay the punishment of the guilty on the head of the innocent; and, therefore, that Christ did not suffer nor die for others.

This reasoning is as ruinous to its own object as it is fallacious in itself. For Christ did suffer and die in agony, and in ignominy: and if not for others, then, for what? Either Christ's innocence, or God's justice, must be impeached and given up, if the death of the cross was not a sacrifice for sin. Those, therefore, who allow that Christ himself was sinless, and that he suffered, cannot prove that God is just: for to inflict, or allow the infliction of suffering and death on a being perfectly innocent, is flagrant injustice.

The other objections against the atonement may all be as triumphantly answered; and that by a process of reasoning neither abstract nor abstruse. They have only to be brought fully under the light of eternal glory, as that is revealed in the Bible, in order to be annihilated: for false or superficial views of heaven lie at the foundation of them all.

I. Bringing many sons to glory is God's chief and final object, in all the mercy and grace which he exercises towards man.

Now glory, as a place, is the heaven where God himself dwells and reigns, visibly and eternally. It is his own special temple, resplendent with his presence, and vocal with his worship. It is his own central throne, from which he surveys and rules the universe.

Again, glory, as a state of character, is likeness to the God of heaven;—it is to bear the image of his spotless

holiness, and to breathe the spirit of his perfect love. This is the glory to which God proposes to bring many sons. Now this heaven is so unlike our earth,—where God is altogether invisible, and man so unholy and unloving,—that, to say the least, a very great change for the better must take place in men, before they can be fit for such glory. There are some things in this heaven which are not very agreeable to the natural mind of man; such as universal and everlasting spirituality and harmony. And then there are in it none of the things which man likes most; such as sensual gratifications and secular honors. Such being the sober facts of the case (and they are solemn and obvious facts), it surely “becomes” God to take care, that this heaven, which is to be his own eternal temple and throne, shall not be disgraced nor disturbed by the presence of unholy or alienated inhabitants. Were it only for the sake of the innumerable company of angels which are in it, it becomes him “for” whom all angels are obedient and harmonious, and “by” whom they are all perfectly happy, to take care that neither their bliss nor their holiness should ever be spoiled by improper company. For, it would be very unbecoming to mix up with such a hierarchy of pure and united spirits, any number of passionate or impure beings. And as “many sons” are to be brought from our earth to this heaven, there is the more need to guard against the introduction of unsanctified sons. Well, all this danger is effectually provided against. Nothing that defileth or divideth shall ever enter the gates of glory. All who shall inherit heaven, will be made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Corruption shall put on incorruption, and mortality put on immortality, to put them off no more for ever. Sin will be as impossible for ever as suffering; and disagreement as unknown as death. All the exceeding weight of glory will be “an eternal weight of glory.” So far this is an arrangement which, it will be allowed, is highly becoming the high character of God, and of heaven too.

This will be a state of things in full harmony with all that we know, or can imagine, of the personal glory and felicity of the Godhead. May we not, therefore, expect that as the grand end of his mercy and grace is so worthy of all his perfections, that all the means of bringing many sons to this glory will be equally worthy and becoming? God is as unlikely to let down his character by the plan of salvation, as by the result of it. His way of saving is, therefore, as sure to be what becomes himself, as heaven is so.

II. The sufferings of Christ are declared to be the way in which it became God to bring man to glory.

This, however, is denied by many, and doubted by more. Other ways are said to be far more becoming the character of God. An atonement is said to be unworthy of his goodness to ask, and of his justice to accept. Accordingly, it is held and upheld by not a few, that the most becoming way of saving sinners is, graciously to forgive and forget all their sins, without any satisfaction to law or justice, but repentance. Let us examine this matter, said to be so becoming!

How does it become Him, who is the author and end of all things, to pardon all sin, and any sin, on the repentance and reformation of the sinner, alone? It is allowed by the enemies of the atonement, that it becomes God to require repentance and amendment, in order to pardon. Well, this must of course be because God hates sin, and because sin is an evil which ought to be repented of and given up, and because an impenitent and unholy heart will not suit heaven. But, unless it can be proved that pardon, thus obtained by repentance, would prevent for ever all sin in heaven, it cannot "become" God to pardon, on such conditions, if He intend to maintain eternal glory. For, were pardon thus cheap, where would be the check against the recurrence of sin in heaven? Who would fear much to renew sinful experiments on high, if the matter were thus easily settled below? Remember, it is essential to the eternity of heaven,

that sin be eternally impossible to all the "many sons" brought to glory. But on this plan, sin would be for ever both possible and practicable, because so easily remedied. In fact, were this doctrine of repentance true, it would be an eternal temptation to sin.

But, it is thought that being in heaven will be enough to prevent all sin for ever. "Forever," is a word easily uttered, but it is a duration unutterable. However, whatever heaven may be, that it always was; and we know that being in it did not prevent some angels from becoming devils. This, therefore, is no eternal antidote against sinning and falling again. "But, if we were made, like heaven, perfectly pure and wise, would not that be an eternal security?" Now, I readily grant that it ought to be so. I must, however, remind you that, at their creation, the now fallen angels were as full and effulgent with holiness and wisdom as God could make them; and yet they rebelled and fell. A plain proof that no degree of "the image of the Heavenly" could prevent, by its own power alone, the return of any son in glory to "the image of the earthly," if he were brought to heaven by mere repentance, however that repentance issued in perfect holiness. The perfect holiness would be for ever in jeopardy by the cheapness and easiness of a penitential pardon. "But, would not all tendency to fall wear itself out by degrees, until every one was so tired of trying rash experiments, that all would give them up for ever, and thus the evil cure itself?" I answer—evil has never cured itself in this way, but waxed worse and worse. But even if it could eventually become its own antidote, how would it "become" God to wait until all had worn themselves weary of trying rash and wrong experiments? "But, why not then confirm for ever the holy principles and inclinations of all as they enter heaven, and thus prevent the possibility of sin?" Confirm them! why, the plan of saving by mere mercy, on mere repentance, leaves nothing to confirm them with, but that kind of power



which keeps the mountains steady, and the stars regular; and such physical power God does not apply to mind, but to dead matter. It would not become Him by whom all minds were made rational, and for whom all minds should be religious, to confirm them in holiness by force. Mind can only be made or kept virtuous by the power of virtuous motives. Unless, therefore, salvation by repentance alone has power in itself to confirm perfection, it should be discarded at once, as untenable and untrue. Now, we have seen that it has not absolute power to do so. The atonement of Emmanuel has, alone, the power of moral confirmation. The evil of sin, seen in his humiliation, seen in his sufferings, seen in his blood, will be an eternal antidote to all sin in heaven. None of all the many sons in glory will ever think of sinning, when they see him in the midst of the throne as a lamb that has been slain. The sight of Christ, and the idea of future sin, will never blend in any conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ. He will be High-Priest for ever in heaven, and, therefore, his crucified presence will be as effectual to prevent all future sin, as his death was to atone for past sin.

Thus, whilst the plan of salvation by the atonement secures repentance of the best kind, it secures also, by moral and immortal means, the eternal holiness of the truly penitent. How, then, could it "become" God to bring many sons to glory, in a way that gives no certainty for keeping them in glory? Would this be worthy of any of his perfections? If not, then it became Him, as he intended to keep them in heaven, to bring them all to it by a way that was sure to keep them for ever sinless: that is, by the "new and living way opened up through the rent veil" of the Saviour's humanity. Is it necessary to prove that this mediatorial method of saving can and must prevent for ever the possibility of sinning or falling again in heaven? If so, the proof is at hand, in the single fact that the atonement will never be repeated. Now, as the death of Christ

is the only thing that could atone for sin, and as He will die no more, it will be known and felt through all the universe of God, that another rebellion would be eternally fatal. This is a point which never can become doubtful or dim in heaven. For as it was impossible for man or angel to conceive that ever the Son of God would die once to save, so it must be for ever impossible to imagine that he will die again; and thus for ever impossible for saints or angels to be tempted again to sin, by the hope of pardon or impunity. Words, principles, warnings, might be misunderstood and misinterpreted, and thus be got over; but the one atonement of Emmanuel is a transaction so peculiar and impressive, that it must for ever prevent all mistakes and all presumption.

“But, sinning in heaven!” it may be said, “no one ever dreams of such a thing. What, then, is the use of spending so much time and strength on a point which people never think about? Would it not be wiser to expend this labor on the prevention of sin on earth?” Well, the only thing which can effectually prevent it on earth is that which alone can eternally prevent it in heaven—the influence of the cross of Christ; and if that be needed there, to keep saints and angels in their place and character, surely it is wanted here, where inclination and temptation to sin are so strong!

I am not, therefore, beating the air, nor fighting shadows, in this argument; but climbing to the highest point in eternal glory, that I may throw myself down with irresistible force upon your consciences, by the fact, that there is only one remedy for sin—only one effectual preventive of sin, in the universe of God. Heaven cannot be kept heaven, without the cross in the midst of the throne. How then can you be cured or kept from sin, without glorying in that cross? The love of Christ has not that constraining influence amongst us which it ought, and might have. How else could so many, who profess to depend on him for salvation, keep back from the sacrament of his death? Oh, consider,

ye who forget his dying command: how can it be safe to neglect this commemoration on earth, seeing it would be unsafe in heaven for any patriarch, prophet, apostle, or martyr, to neglect the marriage supper of the Lamb? I tell you now, and will prove it anon, that there is not an angel in heaven would be safe to cease from joining in the new song; for they, too, are all kept in their proper place and spirit by looking into the sufferings of Christ; and but for the confirming influence of his cross on them, they would all have no more security against falling, than Satan and his angels had in their first estate.

Neglecter of the sacrament, weigh this solemn fact. Consider this, ye who think little about your need of an interest in the blood of the Lamb. All heaven upbraids you both; all saints and angels in glory combine to reprove your guilt and folly in trifling with that blood, which is the only unalterable seal of their safety. How then can you be safe from sin or hell, seeing such conduct as yours would unseat, and uncrown, and ruin, any spirit before the throne?

Brethren! I have not been beating the air this morning, but preparing to deal deadly blows against all hopes of salvation which are not entirely founded upon the cross of Christ. Some argue for another way of salvation; and more take for granted, that if they only repent and reform at last, there is no great danger of missing heaven. Now, were all this as true as it is false, still, a heaven got in this way could not be kept, to a certainty. There would be, in spite of all its glories, eternal danger of losing it again; because there is not moral force, either in repentance or perfection, to prevent sin. Human perfection failed in paradise; angelic perfection failed in the heaven of heavens. He must, therefore, be a dupe or a driveller, who, in the face of such facts, could flatter himself that he could do better to all eternity. No, no, brethren; if we wish for an eternal heaven, we must seek it as the purchase of the Saviour's blood: for it is proved by fatal experience, that

finite beings, however happy or pure, are for ever capable both of erring and falling, when left to their own power. God has, therefore, determined to put a final stop to all defection in all unfallen worlds; and as it would not become the Father of spirits to confirm spirits by force, he so loved them as to confirm them by the death of his Son. He saw that his blood would secure and seal the eternal safety of all the fallen men who trusted in it, and of all the unfallen angels and worlds who adore it; and he withheld not, he grudged not, he hesitated not, to make Him the Redeemer of man, and the ratifier of angels. It was the utmost that infinite love and power could do; and God did it as willingly as he created light.

III. It is declared that, in saving man by the sufferings of Christ, God had a regard to the relation in which all things in the universe stood to himself.

What he did in making Christ a sacrifice for our sins, was what "became" him to do as the author and end of all things visible and invisible. Now,

1. It certainly became God to save man in a way that should not endanger the safety of angels.

But this could not have been done by a penitential salvation. That would have been to tell all the unfallen universe, that tears would repair any injury they might ever do to the honor of God, or their own interests. A fine lesson, in a universe where even innocence is no safeguard from temptation! They must have very low ideas of God, indeed, who can imagine that it would become him to pardon sin on mere repentance. Were this the fact as to the way of pardon, the probability would inevitably be, that God would have to go on pardoning to all eternity. In like manner, a legal salvation would have tended to relax the obedience of angels. For, if man had got to heaven by an imperfect obedience, why might not angels expect to keep heaven by an imperfect one? And if a return to duty be enough for man, why should it not be enough for angels? Thus salvation by

works would just throw loose the whole universe to try whatever experiments they liked : because, on that principle, they would only have to return to their duty, in order to set all right again.

It surely requires but little discernment to see and feel, that such a plan of pardoning would ill become Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.

2. It certainly became God to save man in a way which should not impeach his character for not saving fallen angels.

They had been hurled at once from thrones of light, into chains of eternal darkness, and no unfallen spirit in the universe doubted, at the awful moment of this judgment, its perfect justice ; but all, as they looked on the dark and deserted orbits of these lost morning stars, felt that God had done what "became" his holiness and supremacy. But, could they have felt thus, if the next race of sinners had been pardoned on mere repentance ? Two such different modes of treating sin could not have been thought equally well of. If the first was not too severe, the second was too lenient : for both could not become the same God. Angels must, therefore, have hated the one if they loved the other. For, look at the facts of the case : a river of life flowing down to our world from the very throne of God ; and a river of wrath flowing down to hell from the same throne. This admits of only one explanation, viz. that the blood of Christ flowed for fallen man, and not for fallen angels. On no other principle can we account for, or harmonize with the character of God, the freeness of the salvation offered to us. Eternal happiness offered to one race of sinners, and eternal misery inflicted on another race of sinners, would be an eternal anomaly in the moral government of God, but for the atonement made by Christ in our behalf. But now, no holy nor wise being can wonder that grace reigns by the blood of the Lamb of God. They may and will eternally wonder that he shed his blood for us ; but they cannot wonder that it made salvation sure or free.

Nor can they wonder that Satan and his angels are not redeemed, seeing it was by opposing this scheme of redemption they sinned and fell. "Satan," says Christ, "abode not in The Truth;" and therefore, the Saviour took not on him the nature of angels, but the nature of man.

3. It became God to redeem man, and confirm angels, in such a way as to leave no possibility of imagining that any higher happiness could be found out, than the voluntary gift of God conferred.

The rock on which finite beings would (but for the atonement) be always in danger of splitting, is, the idea that more might be known than is told them, and more enjoyed than is given them. Man and angels split upon this rock. Nor does it seem possible to keep out this rock from the ocean of glory itself, but by placing the Rock of Ages in it. Neither words nor warnings seem enough to produce an eternal and universal persuasion, that there is nothing better beyond what God allows. Indeed the more a finite being has of rank or bliss, the more he is in danger of being tempted to suspect that he could get higher on the scale. They have never studied mental power, who do not understand this fact: and hence, all the mist and dust thrown around the origin of evil. Curiosity is its real origin.

One grand object of redemption was, therefore, to throw open all that can be known or enjoyed. And this the atonement of Christ does fully and freely. It is sensible and decisive proof to the universe, that he who spared not his own Son, but gave him up to save man and seal angels, will, with him, freely give "all things." Thus his unspeakable gift being the very uttermost length that Infinity could go to, it must be eternally seen and felt that there is nothing beyond: for this throws open the whole character of God, and the whole range of possibility; and thus will put an end for ever to all doubts and experiments.

4. It became God to redeem man, and to confirm angels,

in such a way as to render the impartiality of his love to both for ever unquestionable.

Accordingly, it is as sons that he will bring men to glory—the very rank which all the unfallen spirits in all worlds hold. The redeemed, therefore, can never be jealous of angels, nor angels of them. Neither cherubim nor seraphim can be slow to welcome, nor ashamed to love, those whom Christ loved and washed from their sins in his own blood. This is a distinction which no angelic rank can ever eclipse, or lessen. Our nature, united to Godhead in the person of Christ, and perfected in ourselves, will, at least, equal all angelic nature in power and purity; and thus secure an equal place before the throne.

In like manner it will be for ever impossible for redeemed men to envy confirmed angels: because on both the image of God will be equally bright; the smile of God equally sweet; communion with God equally intimate; the mysteries of God equally open; the glories of God equally familiar; and all the range of heavenly enjoyment equally free. This will be a universe of harmony and happiness! Yes; and the cross of Christ will be the central pillar on which all its eternal weight of glory will hang. Under and around that immortal pillar, sin shall never revive, nor error occur, nor strife divide, nor emulation estrange, nor death enter, nor pain be felt, nor weariness experienced; but life, love, joy, and holiness, flow on for ever, perfect as the bliss and being of God.

## XXVII.

### THE GIFT OF GOD.

LUTHER.

[MARTIN LUTHER was the Apostle of the Sixteenth century—the master-mind and giant-father of the Reformation, under God. His mission was to re-open the way for God's saving grace to flow freely to men—to re-awaken mankind to the sanctity of personal conscience. The papacy interposed itself between the human soul and the Almighty, till the words of Luther,—inspired by unquestioning faith in God's declaration, "The just shall live by faith,"—fell upon it like huge sledge-hammer blows, crushing its impious assumptions into the dust. The life of this great reformer, which is an outline sketch of the Reformation, must be very briefly referred to here. Martin Luther was born the son of a miner, at Eisleben, in Saxony, November 10th 1483. He graduated from the University at Erfurt, became doctor of philosophy, and in 1505 gave up the world to be a monk. He was made doctor of divinity in 1512. Five years later, in fulfillment of his vows as a defender of Holy Scripture, he attacked, in ninety-five theses, the blasphemous sale of indulgences by Tetzel. As Pope Leo X. sanctioned these practices, Europe was convulsed by a moral shock, and the Reformation began. Neither frowns nor flatteries could silence this bold minister of God. A grand pivot-scene of human history,—perhaps unequalled elsewhere by mortal,—was the firm stand of Luther before assembled monarchs and princes in the Diet at Worms, where he refused to retract in those sublime words: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen." In 1522 the New Testament, and in 1534 the Old Testament, were translated by him into German. The struggles, labors, and achievements of his life are picturesquely told in D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation. He died at Eisleben, February 18th 1546. His works are



published in twenty-seven volumes, and but few have been translated into English. Schulze & Gassman (Columbus, Ohio) are now issuing his admirable Sermons on the Gospels. From the second volume of these "House Postils,"—a series of plain preachings to his household—this version by Prof. E. Schmid is taken by permission.]

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*—John iii. 16-21.

THIS Gospel is one of the most precious passages in the whole New Testament, and fully deserves, if it could be done, to be written with golden letters into our hearts. Every Christian ought to learn this consoling text by heart, and should repeat it once at least each day, so that we would know these words well and could readily apply them for our consolation and the strengthening of our faith. They are words which have power to gladden us when we are sad and to bring us back to life when we are dead, if we but accept them earnestly in true faith. But inasmuch as it is impossible for us to comprehend fully and to express properly the contents of this glorious text, let us pray earnestly unto God to impress these words deeply upon our hearts through His Holy Spirit, so that they may become powerful in us, and may give us much joy and consolation, Amen.

The sum and substance of this glorious, comfortable, and blessed passage is this, that God loved the world so dearly that He gave His only begotten Son to save men from eternal death and to give them everlasting life. Christ our

Lord speaks to us, as it were, in these words: Heed what I tell you of a peculiar, unheard-of occurrence; yea, I will point you to a great, precious and valuable treasure, which is totally unlike any earthly gifts, by which you can now be rich and blessed for evermore. All the circumstances connected with the bestowal and reception of this precious gift are so peculiar and overwhelmingly grand that human thoughts cannot compass them, and much less can our words express their great importance.

If we consider first the Giver of this blessing, we find that the text says nothing of emperors, kings, or other dignitaries of the world, but it speaks of God himself, who is incomprehensible and omnipotent, who has created everything through His Word, who has all and preserves all and is over all, compared with whom all creation, heaven and earth, with all they contain, is but as an insignificant grain of sand. He, the Almighty, is the great Giver of all blessings, and His gifts are so glorious that the most valued treasures of men, of emperors and kings, fade away into nothingness when compared with the mercies of God. Let us, therefore, rejoice greatly and sing for gladness in view of these blessings, and let us consider as mere trifles everything else that the world can bestow. What indeed can be greater or more glorious than the Almighty Himself!

This God, who is infinite and ineffable, manifests His loving-kindness in a degree beyond all measure. What He gives He gives not as something merited, or because it is His duty to give it, but simply, as our text says, through love. He is a Giver who begrudges not his gifts, but delights in bestowing them; He gives on account of endless, divine love, as Christ says: "For God so loved the world."

There is no other virtue so glorious as love. What we dearly love we are ready to defend and protect at the risk of our life. Patience, chastity, temperance, &c., are also praiseworthy virtues, but cannot be compared with love;

she is queen over them all, and comprehends them all. Surely if one is pious and righteous, he will not defraud or injure his brother, but will assist him in everything; but if we love a person, we are ever ready to devote ourselves entirely to his welfare and to assist him, according as he has need, with our counsel and our possessions. Thus, as Christ declares in our text, does God also do toward us. He gives us blessings beyond measure, not because He is patient or because we are righteous and deserve it, but through love, the greatest of all virtues. In view of this fact our hearts should awake, all our sadness should vanish, for we see before us the inexhaustible love of the divine heart, which we ought to cherish in true faith as the greatest of all gifts, knowing that God is the highest and most glorious Giver of blessings unto us, and that they all proceed from the greatest of all virtues.

The fact that anything is given from true love makes the gift itself greater and more precious. If therefore we are convinced that love prompts the bestowal of any gift, we are well pleased; but when we doubt the existence of this motive in the giver, we care but little for his gift. Thus if God had given us only one eye or one foot and we were convinced that fatherly love prompted him to do this, we would be entirely content and better satisfied than we would otherwise be if we had a hundred eyes and a hundred feet.

But the words are plain: "God so loved the world." Therefore we ought to value highly, on account of His love, all His gifts, especially those which he has ordained to our salvation and the strengthening of our faith, as Holy Baptism, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, &c. These gifts appear not brilliant before the world, yet unto us they are heaven itself, and make us glad and cheerful because they flow from the love of our Father toward us and are instituted for our benefit. Therefore Christ in this connection not only teaches us that God will give us something,

but also in what manner he will do this, namely, through divine, Fatherly love.

Thus we see how great and ineffable are the Giver and the motive which prompts Him to grant us His blessings. But the gift itself is equally glorious and inexpressible. We hear from our text that God through love does not give us a dollar, a horse, a cow, an eye, a kingdom, or even the heavens with the sun and stars, nor the whole creation, but He gives us "His only begotten Son," who is like unto Himself in everything.

This gift must surely arouse within us the deepest emotions of happiness, so that our hearts will ever be glad and leap for joy. Even as the Giver, God himself, is endless and incomprehensible in His love, so the gift itself, His Son, is eternal and unspeakable. God in this gift bestows Himself with all that He is, as St. Paul says, (Rom. 8): "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The victory over the devil, sin, death, and hell, as well as the gift of heaven, righteousness, and eternal life, is ours; yea all things are ours now, because we have the Son as our gift, in whom all else is comprehended.

If we then truly believe in this gift and accept it in real faith, all creation, be it good or evil, be it life or death, heaven or hell, must be at our service, as St. Paul in another place says: "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3.) Indeed, if we fully consider this gift, we must confess and say that it is a boon which in value transcends all else in heaven and earth, and in comparison with which all treasures in the world are as a mite to a mountain of gold. But alas, our miserable unbelief and the terrible darkness which enshrouds us, as Christ himself shortly after this complains, prevent our

published in twenty-seven volumes, and but few have been translated into English. Schulze & Gassman (Columbus, Ohio) are now issuing his admirable Sermons on the Gospels. From the second volume of these "House Postils,"—a series of plain preachings to his household—this version by Prof. E. Schmid is taken by permission.]

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*—John iii. 16-21.

THIS Gospel is one of the most precious passages in the whole New Testament, and fully deserves, if it could be done, to be written with golden letters into our hearts. Every Christian ought to learn this consoling text by heart, and should repeat it once at least each day, so that we would know these words well and could readily apply them for our consolation and the strengthening of our faith. They are words which have power to gladden us when we are sad and to bring us back to life when we are dead, if we but accept them earnestly in true faith. But inasmuch as it is impossible for us to comprehend fully and to express properly the contents of this glorious text, let us pray earnestly unto God to impress these words deeply upon our hearts through His Holy Spirit, so that they may become powerful in us, and may give us much joy and consolation, Amen.

The sum and substance of this glorious, comfortable, and blessed passage is this, that God loved the world so dearly that He gave His only begotten Son to save men from eternal death and to give them everlasting life. Christ our

Lord speaks to us, as it were, in these words: Heed what I tell you of a peculiar, unheard-of occurrence; yea, I will point you to a great, precious and valuable treasure, which is totally unlike any earthly gifts, by which you can now be rich and blessed for evermore. All the circumstances connected with the bestowal and reception of this precious gift are so peculiar and overwhelmingly grand that human thoughts cannot compass them, and much less can our words express their great importance.

If we consider first the Giver of this blessing, we find that the text says nothing of emperors, kings, or other dignitaries of the world, but it speaks of God himself, who is incomprehensible and omnipotent, who has created everything through His Word, who has all and preserves all and is over all, compared with whom all creation, heaven and earth, with all they contain, is but as an insignificant grain of sand. He, the Almighty, is the great Giver of all blessings, and His gifts are so glorious that the most valued treasures of men, of emperors and kings, fade away into nothingness when compared with the mercies of God. Let us, therefore, rejoice greatly and sing for gladness in view of these blessings, and let us consider as mere trifles everything else that the world can bestow. What indeed can be greater or more glorious than the Almighty Himself!

This God, who is infinite and ineffable, manifests His loving-kindness in a degree beyond all measure. What He gives He gives not as something merited, or because it is His duty to give it, but simply, as our text says, through love. He is a Giver who begrudges not his gifts, but delights in bestowing them; He gives on account of endless, divine love, as Christ says: "For God so loved the world."

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hearts from realizing what a blessing we have in this gift of the Son of God; we hear these glorious words, but they rush by our outward ears, and the heart remains cold and cheerless. When we hear of a house or farm which is for sale on easy terms, we run and are as eager to make the purchase as if our existence depended upon it; but when the glorious Gospel is preached, that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for its salvation, we are shamefully and sinfully careless and lazy about hearing and accepting this blessed truth. Who is at the bottom of this wicked indifference and carelessness as to the greatest gift, so that we do not accept it nor derive from it joy and consolation? No one but the old devil himself; he blinds our hearts to such a degree that we permit the preaching of this precious Gospel to go by unheeded, while we in the meanwhile busy ourselves with temporal cares.

For this reason I remarked, at the beginning of this sermon, that we ought to repeat these words when we get out of bed in the morning and again when we retire in the evening, so that we may know them right well and praise God for His unutterable blessings. For surely all, the Giver, His love, and the Gift bestowed so undeservedly, simply through love, are most glorious and beyond our comprehension. The gift is one freely given, and will ever remain a gracious blessing which cannot be borrowed, lent, nor bought; all we have to do to obtain it is to hold out our hand and to receive willingly and gladly this treasure. Alas, that our hands and hearts are so reluctant and even unwilling to take such a glorious gift, which is so freely offered, and which is designed to be ours for evermore!

What shall those people be called who refuse to accept a kind gift and blessing? Suppose a poor, ragged beggar, nearly exhausted with hunger, meets with a great and charitable prince, who offers to give him a residence and a great yearly income, and to make him a lord, but that the beggar

haughtily turns away from his benefactor without accepting his kindness, what would this foolish man be called by the world? Surely everybody would say that he is crazy and acts more like a brute than a human being. This would be the verdict of the world. Here, however, there is offered to the world no palace nor principality, no kingdom nor imperial domain, but the Son of God, and God himself urges the world to accept and keep this gift. But alas, we men are the ones who refuse to accept this gift; we turn our backs upon God, the kind Giver. From this we can judge what a great and horrible sin unbelief is, for it is not natural that men should refuse a gift and willingly turn from it.

This proves how mad and thoughtless the world is; she does not rejoice at this gift of God, and refuses to receive it when offered. No doubt she would be quick to stretch out her hands for it if it were a dollar or a new coat; but as it is the Son of God, every one acts as if the gift were valueless.

"The world" is mentioned by name in this connection as the ungrateful one who spurns this gift which is offered to her freely. For what has the world done to merit such love and mercy of God? Nothing at all. She is the devil's bride, the greatest enemy of God and the greatest blasphemer. Yet we read here: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

My hearer, inscribe this truth deeply in your heart. And since you have now heard who God is, and what His gift is, which He gives alone through love, hear also what the world is. She is constituted of a multitude of people who do not believe in God and who make Him a liar; yea, they blaspheme His name and Word, and persecute it. Hence they are those who disobey father and mother, who are murderers, adulterers, treacherous persons, thieves, hypocrites, and the like, as we, alas, can see but too clearly every day of

our life. The world is full of falsehood and blasphemy. Nevertheless God, through love, gives His Son to this bride of the devil, his greatest foe and persecutor.

This fact also magnifies the gift. God does not regard the sins and crimes of the world, nor her persecution of His name and Word, so as to withhold His gift on that account. It would seem as if God were too holy and His gift too precious to endure the perversion and wickedness of the world. But God does not regard the sins of the world, whether they be against the first or against the second table of the law, as too great to permit the manifestation of his love toward her; yea, on account of her sins and great misery, in which we all would have to perish if God did not grant us His help, He is merciful, and prompted by His love, He comes to our assistance.

Ought we then not to love such a merciful God in return and to trust implicitly in Him who forgives sins, and will not suffer the ungrateful world to perish for her transgressions, which are innumerable? Yea, the sins of every one of us are innumerable; who then could enumerate the sins of the whole world? Yet we read that God is ready to forgive all our transgressions; for from the love of God comes the forgiveness of sins. We ought to consider this attentively. If God gives so much, yea even Himself to the world, which is His natural enemy, we are forced to conclude that His mercy and grace will also manifest itself toward us, no matter what our experiences are during this life. Therefore we ought to trust in this love, and hope for every blessing from God for Christ's sake.

Such thoughts must encourage the heart and make it glad. I and many Christians have to confess that while we were in popery we lived in great wickedness and idolatry, and were guilty of many a sin. God however did not punish such wickedness as we deserved, but manifested His love by revealing again through the Gospel His Son, whom He had

given to the world. We were again permitted to hear and to understand the glorious Gospel, proclaiming that God is not wroth with the world, but that He loves us and has given His Son in our behalf. Alas, we are ungrateful and do not realize this truth as we should, else would our hearts be filled with joy, and we would be determined not only to serve God right willingly, but also to suffer without complaint everything in His service, on account of the precious treasure which we have. It is our unbelief which prevents such joy and seeks the pleasures of the world, which come from the devil and are accursed.

We have now considered four parts in our text, namely, the Giver of the gift, the gift itself, how it is given, and to whom it is given. It is impossible to express fully in words the great importance of these four considerations.

Now follows the *causa finalis*, what purpose God has in view in the bestowal of this gift. It contains no outward advantages for us; we are neither clothed by it, nor fed, nor sheltered: much less is it injurious to our bodies; it contains no poison. Thus He gives His word, Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar, not to our injury but to our salvation. This gift of the only begotten Son is granted unto us to this end, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

From this declaration we learn that this gift does not bring us money, goods, honor, or power in this world, for all such benefits would be but transitory. Yea, if we had all these things we would nevertheless still be under the dominion of the devil. But now when the Son of God is given us, through the Father's love toward us, it follows that we are freed from sin, death, and hell, if we believe in the Saviour; for He crushed the head of the serpent and despoiled it of its power; He slew sin and devoured death and extinguished the fire of hell, so that they are all vanquished for evermore and deprived of their supremacy over

us. So great and glorious was this gift. Honor, praise, and glory be unto God, the merciful Giver of this blessing, for ever and for ever, Amen.

Surely we have reason enough to feel happy at this occurrence, especially since Christ Himself asserts in our text that He was given us to overpower hell and to make our timid hearts bold and full of cheerfulness. Through the firm assurance that we have a reconciled God in heaven, who loves us and who through love gave His Son for us, so that we should not perish but have everlasting life, we are made glad; for we know that death has now no authority over us, and that eternal life is ours in Christ.

This truth we cannot learn or understand too well; therefore we ought to pray every day that God may through His Holy Spirit inscribe these words deeply in our hearts, that these may be illumined and enlivened thereby. Then will we become true theologians, who know Christ aright and adhere to His doctrine, prepared to suffer for this faith all ills and adversities which, in the providence of God, may visit us. But inasmuch as we do not value these words as we should, and only hear them with our outward ears, they cannot prove their power in our hearts; we remain to-day as we were yesterday, and it is a sin and a shame that we see not with our eyes nor hear with our ears. Most certainly will the damned cry out on the day of judgment and lament, because they were so careless about the preaching and hearing of these words of consolation while yet on earth.

Let us now consider in what way this glorious gift ought to be received, in what receptacle this precious treasure should be securely laid and guarded. It is of great importance to know this. Christ himself points it out to us in the words: "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This testimony is plain and clear. It declares that faith,

that is, a firm confidence in the mercy and love of God in Christ, is the receptacle into which we should receive and in which we should keep the gift of the Son of God. Love and mercy prompt God to give us such a boon, while we can receive and retain it only through faith. No work or merit of ours avails us anything in this; for even our best works are worthless in this regard. We must stretch forth our hands in faith; and as God through love is the Giver, so we must through faith in Christ be the receivers of His gift. We must believe what our text tells us, that God is kind and merciful, and that He manifests His love toward us in sending His only begotten Son into our flesh and blood, to take upon himself our sins, as John the Baptist and the prophet Isaiah declare: "This is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." With such a gift, and assured of the love of God, we can stay our hearts against the assaults of sin and the accusations of our conscience; for we know that he is not wroth nor terrible, but that for Christ's sake he is kind and gracious unto us. Whoever believes this is truly happy and blessed, for this gift is so great and powerful that it crushes sin, death, and every evil. As a burning fire devours a little drop of water, thus are the sins of the whole world annihilated when they come in contact with Christ; yea, if we cling to Him in faith, our sins will be removed and destroyed, even as a straw is devoured in a mighty conflagration.

Christ Himself tells us in our Gospel: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The words "whosoever believeth in Him" are of especial importance here. Christ says nothing at all of good works as means unto salvation. Faith alone can and must receive this gift. Therefore we are undisturbed by the noise of our adversaries; we cling firmly to this doctrine, for here it is said: "Whosoever believeth in

Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." If we doubt this, or change it, we accuse Christ of falsehood and set ourselves up as judges over Him.

What glorious words of consolation and eternal life! God grant that we may faithfully receive them into our hearts. Whoever has accepted them in faith will not fear the devil, nor sin, nor death, but will exclaim, in great joy and firm assurance: I am comforted, for I now have the Son of God given unto me through the Father's love toward the world. This I firmly believe, because the Word of God, the holy Gospel, thus declares it unto me. And Thy Word, O God, and Thy Son Jesus Christ cannot lie; this I know and believe. Wherein I am weak in faith, give me strength to receive and to retain this Thy great gift and love, else it will be of no advantage unto me. It behooves us therefore to become more and more acquainted with this gift and to be comforted by it; this however can only take place through faith, as Christ teaches us. The stronger our faith, the greater will be our happiness and safety, so that we can cheerfully do and suffer what God imposes upon us, and this because we know that he is merciful and full of love toward us.

Perhaps you will object and say: Yea, if I were as pious and holy as Peter, Paul, or the holy Virgin, then would I dare to believe and be comforted with this gift. They were saints, and no doubt for them this gift was intended, but I, a poor sinner, have no right to appropriate it unto myself, for I have so often and in such manifold ways offended and opposed God. Such thoughts cannot be avoided when we hear this Gospel, and then think of our condition and great transgressions. But we must watch that these thoughts do not gain such power over us that we lose sight of the Gospel; to this we must speedily return and in this find comfort. Such thoughts are really nothing but unbelief, which would

keep us from this gift and its comfortable assurance of the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Christ.

Unbelief, however, can be successfully combated only with the Word of God. Christ our Saviour gives unto us this Word, so that we dare not doubt its truthfulness. He tells us that His Father in heaven, the everlasting God, so loved "the world," that He even gave for it His only begotten Son. Now it is evident that the expression "the world" does not mean Mary, Peter, Paul, &c., but that it includes the whole human race, one and all, without any exception. Or have you any doubt that you are a human being? If so, feel your chest or your nose, and you will find out whether you are different from other people. Why then will you persistently exclude yourself from the application of this expression "world," when Christ so plainly includes in it all men, and does not apply it merely to the Virgin Mary, to St. Peter, or to St. Paul? If you and I refuse to accept Christ, because we think that we have no part in him, we make him a liar, for He said that He was given for the whole world. No, we must rather come to the opposite conclusion, that we have as good a right to this gift as Peter or Paul, or any one else has, simply because we are men, and as such a part of the world. Let us therefore beware and not doubt God's words by thinking that we cannot be sure whether we belong to those, to whom and for whom He gave His Son that they might have everlasting life. With such thoughts we deny that God speaks the truth.

Let us therefore shun such doubts, and the thoughts producing them, as we would shun the very devil himself. Let us be firm in faith and say: We know that God gave His gift not only to Peter and Paul, for if he had desired to bestow it only upon those perfectly worthy of it, He would have given it to the holy angels, who are pure, undefiled spirits, or to the sun and moon, which obey perfectly the



law of God by continuing in their prescribed course; but we read otherwise, namely, that "God gave His Son unto the world." Therefore we all have a part in this glorious gift, just as well as David or any apostle. Who was David? Did he not commit gross sins? Who were the apostles? Were they not all sinners and unworthy of this gift?

Let no one, therefore, reason thus: I am a sinner, and am not as holy as St. Peter, consequently I dare not appropriate this gift to my consolation. Far be it from us to harbor such thoughts. Let us believe in God's Word implicitly; and because He says that He gave this gift unto the world, let us all, since we belong to the world, no matter who we are, lay hold of it in faith; for if we do not, we deny the truthfulness of God, and thereby commit a great and damnable sin.

Some perhaps might think: If God had told this unto me especially, I would believe it and be assured that it also applies to me. In this you err, my friend; God intentionally speaks in a general way, and says that He gave His Son unto the whole world, that all may be saved and none be excluded. If there are any who are not benefited by this gift, they are themselves to blame; they exclude themselves, through wicked unbelief, from the blessing of the gift of God, and will have to render an account for their faithlessness; yea, their own words will condemn them. Besides, we have the holy sacraments, instituted of Christ Himself, to be employed by us as means of grace, by which we are to obtain and to appropriate to ourselves this gift.

This is a brief and simple explanation of our beautiful and precious text to-day, which is so comprehensive that it can never be exhausted. It contains the chief doctrine of salvation, that God, through love towards the wicked world, gave His only begotten Son to be its Saviour. Let every one learn what a glorious treasure and consolation the Christians have, who God is, and what the world is, and

how through faith we can obtain and enjoy this mercy, as Christ says: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." The doctrine concerning good works and their relation to faith cannot be considered in this connection, and will receive attention at some other time. Here we must consider what God gives unto us and how we ought to receive His gift.

Christ does not dwell here upon the duties which a Christian must fulfil to prove himself an obedient, beloved child of God, nor does he speak of the necessary gratitude for the love of God and the gift of eternal life. It suffices, therefore, if we in this connection restrict our consideration to the mercy of God, and to the truth that we are saved alone through this grace, which must be accepted in true faith, and with which good works on our part have nothing to do; for we are saved only through the love of God who gave His only begotten Son for us, for whose sake he now forgives us all our sins. God grant us his grace, that we may believe this truth and be happy in it in life and in death. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

## XXVIII.

### COMMUNION WITH GOD.

NEWMAN.

[JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B. D., an eloquent coadjutor of Dr. Pusey in the "Oxford Tract" retrocession from the doctrines of the Reformation, and author of the famous "Tract No. 90," was born in London, February 21st 1801. He gained high honors at Trinity College, Oxford, was ordained in 1824, and received the vicarage of St. Mary's, Oxford, four years later. Here were preached thoughtful and brilliant sermons, till his lamentable yet conscientious secession to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. He is now superior of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, Birmingham, and head of a high school for Roman Catholic youth. Almost all his Protestant sermons, published in nine volumes, show evidence of his ascetic spirit, theological convictions, and thorough moral consecration. (The text following is the Psalter version.)]

*"One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require: even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit his temple."*—Psalms xxvii. 4.

WHAT the Psalmist desired, we Christians enjoy to the full,—the liberty of holding communion with God in His Temple all through our life. Under the Law, the presence of God was but in one place; and therefore could be approached and enjoyed only at set times. For far the greater part of their lives, the chosen people were in one sense "cast out of the sight of His eyes;" and the periodical return to it which they were allowed, was a privilege highly coveted and earnestly expected. Much more precious was the privilege of continually dwelling in His sight, which is spoken of in the text. "One thing," says the Psalmist, "have I desired of the Lord . . . that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His temple." He desired

to have continually that communion with God in prayer, praise, and meditation, to which His presence admits the soul; and this, I say, is the portion of Christians. Faith opens upon us Christians the Temple of God wherever we are; for that Temple is a spiritual one, and so is everywhere present. "We have access," says the Apostle,—that is, we have admission or introduction, "by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And hence, he says elsewhere, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice." "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks." And St. James, "Is any afflicted? let him pray: is any merry? let him sing Psalms." Prayer, praise, thanksgiving, contemplation, are the peculiar privilege and duty of a Christian, and that for their own sakes, from the exceeding comfort and satisfaction they afford him, and without reference to any definite results to which prayer tends, without reference to the answers which are promised to it, from a general sense of the blessedness of being under the shadow of God's throne.

I propose, then, in what follows, to make some remarks on communion with God, or prayer in a large sense of the word; not as regards its external consequences, but as it may be considered to affect our own minds and hearts.

What, then, is prayer? It is (if it may be said reverently) *conversing* with God. We converse with our fellow-men, and then we use familiar language, because they *are* our fellows. We converse with God, and then we use the lowliest, awfulest, calmest, concisest language we can, because He *is* God. Prayer, then, is *divine* converse, differing from human as God differs from man. Thus St. Paul says, "Our conversation is in heaven,"—not indeed thereby meaning converse of words only, but intercourse and manner of living generally; yet still in an especial way converse of words or prayer, because language is the special means of all intercourse. Our intercourse with our fellow-men goes on, not

by sight, but by sound, not by eyes, but by ears. Hearing is the social sense, and language is the social bond. In like manner, as the Christian's conversation is in heaven, as it is his duty, with Enoch and other Saints, *to walk with God*, so his voice is in heaven, his heart "inditing of a good matter," of prayers and praises. Prayers and praises are the mode of his intercourse with the next world, as the converse of business or recreation is the mode in which this world is carried on in all its separate courses. He who does not pray, does not claim his citizenship with heaven, but lives, though an heir of the kingdom, as if he were a child of earth.

Now, it is not surprising if that duty or privilege, which is the characteristic token of our heavenly inheritance, should also have an especial influence upon our fitness for claiming it. He who does not use a gift, loses it; the man who does not use his voice or limbs, loses power over them, and becomes disqualified for the state of life to which he is called. In like manner, he who neglects to pray, not only suspends the enjoyment, but is in a way to lose the possession, of his divine citizenship. We are members of another world; we have been severed from the companionship of devils, and brought into that invisible kingdom of Christ which faith alone discerns,—that mysterious Presence of God which encompasses us, which is in us, and around us, which is in our heart, which enfolds us as though with a robe of light, hiding our scarred and discolored souls from the sight of Divine Purity, and making them shining as the Angels; and which flows in upon us too by means of all forms of beauty and grace which this visible world contains, in a starry host or (if I may so say) a milky way of divine companions, the inhabitants of Mount Zion, where we dwell. Faith, I say, alone apprehends all this; but yet there is something which is not left to faith,—our own tastes, likings, motives, and habits. Of these we are conscious in our degree, and we can make ourselves more and more conscious; and as conscious-

ness tells us what they are, reason tells us whether they are such as become, as correspond with, that heavenly world into which we have been translated.

I say then, it is plain to common sense that the man who has not accustomed himself to the language of heaven will be no fit inhabitant of it when, in the Last Day, it is perceptibly revealed. The case is like that of a language or style of speaking of this world; we know well a foreigner from a native. Again, we know those who have been used to kings' courts or educated society from others. By their voice, accent, and language, and not only so, by their gestures and gait, by their usages, by their mode of conducting themselves and their principles of conduct, we know well what a vast difference there is between those who have lived in good society and those who have not. What indeed is called "*good society*" is often very worthless society. I am not speaking of it to praise it; I only mean, that, as the manners which men call refined or courtly are gained only by intercourse with courts and polished circles, and as the influence of the words there used (that is, of the ideas which those words, striking again and again on the ear, convey to the mind), extends in a most subtle way over all that men do, over the turn of their sentences, and the tone of their questions and replies, and their general bearing, and the spontaneous flow of their thoughts, and their mode of viewing things, and the general maxims or heads to which they refer them, and the motives which determine them, and their likings and dislikings, hopes and fears, and their relative estimate of persons, and the intensity of their perceptions towards particular objects; so a habit of prayer, the practice of turning to God and the unseen world, in every season, in every place, in every emergency (let alone its supernatural effect of prevailing with God),—prayer, I say, has what may be called a *natural* effect, in spiritualizing and elevating the soul. A man is no longer what he was before; gradually, impercepti-

bly to himself, he has imbibed a new set of ideas, and become imbued with fresh principles. He is as one coming from kings' courts, with a grace, a delicacy, a dignity, a propriety, a justness of thought and taste, a clearness and firmness of principle, all his own. Such is the power of God's secret grace acting through those ordinances which He has enjoined us; such the evident fitness of those ordinances to produce the results which they set before us. As speech is the organ of human society, and the means of human civilization, so is prayer the instrument of divine fellowship and divine training.

I will give, for the sake of illustration, some instances in detail of one particular fault of mind, which among others a habit of prayer is calculated to cure.

For instance; many a man seems to have no grasp at all of doctrinal truth. He cannot get himself to think it of importance what a man believes, and what not. He tries to do so; for a time he does; he does for a time think that a certain faith is necessary for salvation, that certain doctrines are to be put forth and maintained in charity to the souls of men. Yet though he thinks so one day, he changes the next; he holds the truth, and then lets it go again. He is filled with doubts; suddenly the question crosses him, "Is it possible that such and such a doctrine *is* necessary?" and he relapses into an uncomfortable sceptical state, out of which there is no outlet. Reasonings do not convince him; he *cannot* be convinced; he has no grasp of truth. Why? Because the next world is not a reality to him; it only exists in his mind in the form of certain conclusions from certain reasonings. It is but an inference; and never can be more, never can be present to his mind, until he acts, instead of arguing. Let him but act as if the next world were before him; let him but give himself to such devotional exercises as we ought to observe in the presence of an Almighty, All-

holy, and All-merciful God, and it will be a rare case indeed if his difficulties do not vanish.

Or again: a man may have a natural disposition towards caprice and change; he may be apt to take up first one fancy, then another, from novelty or other reason; he may take sudden likings or dislikings, or be tempted to form a scheme of religion for himself, of what he thinks best or most beautiful out of all the systems which divide the world.

Again: he is troubled perhaps with a variety of unbecoming thoughts, which he would fain keep out of his mind if he could. He finds himself unsettled and uneasy, dissatisfied with his condition, easily excited, sorry at sin one moment, forgetting it the next, feeble-minded, unable to rule himself, tempted to dote upon trifles, apt to be caught and influenced by vanities, and to abandon himself to languor or indolence.

Once more: he has not a clear perception of the path of truth and duty. This is an especial fault among us now-a-days: men are actuated perhaps by the best feelings and the most amiable motives, and are not fairly chargeable with insincerity; and yet there is a want of straightforwardness in their conduct. They allow themselves to be guided by expediency, and defend themselves, and perhaps so plausibly, that though you are not convinced, you are silenced. They attend to what others think, more than to what God says; they look at Scripture more as a gift to man than as a gift from God; they consider themselves at liberty to modify its plain precepts by a certain discretionary rule; they listen to the voice of great men, and allow themselves to be swayed by them; they make comparisons and strike the balance between the impracticability of the whole that God commands, and the practicability of effecting a part, and think they may consent to give up something, if they can secure the rest. They shift about in opinion, going first a little this way, then a little that, according to the loudness and positiveness with which others speak; they are at the mercy of the last



speaker, and they think they observe a safe, judicious, and middle course, by always keeping a certain distance behind those who go furthest. Or they are rash in their religious projects and undertakings, and forget that they may be violating the lines and fences of God's law, while they move about freely at their pleasure. Now, I will not judge another; I will not say that in this or that given case the fault of mind in question (for any how it is a fault), does certainly arise from some certain cause which I choose to guess at: but at least there *are* cases where this wavering of mind *does* arise from scantiness of prayer; and if so, it is worth a man's considering, who is thus unsteady, timid, and dimsighted, whether this scantiness be not perchance the true reason of such infirmities in his own case, and whether a "continuing instant in prayer,"—by which I mean, not merely prayer morning and evening, but something suitable to his disease, something extraordinary, as medicine is extraordinary, a "redceming of time" from society and recreation in order to pray more,—whether such a change in his habits would not remove them?

For what is the very promise of the New Covenant but stability? what is it, but a clear insight into the truth, such as will enable us to know how to walk, how to profess, how to meet the circumstances of life, how to withstand gain-sayers? Are we built upon a rock, or upon the sand? are we after all tossed about on the sea of opinion, when Christ has stretched out His hand to us, to help and encourage us? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Such is the word of promise. Can we possibly have apprehensions about what man will do to us or say of us, can we flatter the great ones of earth, or timidly yield to the many, or be dazzled by talent, or drawn aside by interest, who are in the habit of divine conversations? "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," says St. John, "and ye know all things. I have not

written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. . . . The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you. . . . Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This is that birth, by which the baptized soul not only enters, but actually embraces and realizes the kingdom of God. This is the true and effectual regeneration, when the seed of life takes root in man and thrives. Such men have accustomed themselves to speak to God, and God has ever spoken to them; and they feel "the powers of the world to come" as truly as they feel the presence of this world, because they have been accustomed to speak and act as if it were real. All of us must rely on something; all must look up, to admire, court, make themselves one with something. Most men cast in their lot with the visible world; but true Christians with Saints and Angels.

Such men are little understood by the world because they are not of the world; and hence it sometimes happens that even the better sort of men are often disconcerted and vexed by them. It cannot be otherwise; they move forward on principles so different from what are commonly assumed as true. They take for granted, as first principles, what the world wishes to have proved in detail. They have become familiar with the sights of the next world, till they talk of them as if all men admitted them. The immortality of truth, its oneness, the impossibility of falsehood coalescing with it, what truth is, what it should lead one to do in particular cases, how it lies in the details of life,—all these points are mere matters of debate in the world, and men go through long processes of argument, and pride themselves on their subtleness in defending or attacking, in making probable or improbable, ideas which are assumed without a word by those who have lived in heaven, as the very ground to start from.

In consequence, such men are called bad disputants, inconsecutive reasoners, strange, eccentric, or perverse thinkers, merely because they do not take for granted, nor go to prove, what others do,—because they do not go about to define and determine the sights (as it were), the mountains and rivers and plains, and sun, moon, and stars, of the next world. And hence, in turn, they are commonly unable to enter into the ways of thought or feelings of other men, having been engrossed with God's thoughts and God's ways. Hence, perhaps, they seem abrupt in what they say and do; nay, even make others feel constrained and uneasy in their presence. Perhaps they appear reserved too, because they take so much for granted which might be drawn out, and because they cannot bring themselves to tell all their thoughts from their sacredness, and because they are drawn off from free conversation to the thought of heaven, on which their minds rest. Nay, perchance, they appear severe, because their motives are not understood, nor their sensitive jealousy for the honor of God and their charitable concern for the good of their fellow-Christians duly appreciated. In short, to the world they seem like *foreigners*. We know how foreigners strike us; they are often to *our* notions strange and unpleasing in their manners; why is this? merely *because* they are of a different country. Each country has its own manners,—one may not be better than other; but we naturally like our own ways, and we do not understand other. We do not see their meaning. We misconstrue them; we think they mean something unpleasant, something rude, or over-free, or haughty, or unrefined, when they do not. And in like manner, the world at large, not only is not Christian, but cannot discern or understand the Christian. Thus our Blessed Lord Himself was not recognised or honored by His relatives, and (as is plain to every reader of Scripture) He often seems to speak abruptly and severely. So too St. Paul was considered by the Corinthians as contemptible in speech

And hence St. John, speaking of "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God," adds, "therefore the world *knoweth* us not, because it knew Him not." Such is the effect of divine meditations: admitting us into the next world, and withdrawing us from this; making us children of God, but withal "strangers unto our brethren, even aliens unto our mother's children." Yea, though the true servants of God increase in meekness and love day by day, and to those who know them will seem what they really are; and though their good works are evident to all men, and cannot be denied, yet such is the eternal law which goes between the Church and the world—we cannot be friends of both; and they who take their portion with the Church, will seem, except in some remarkable cases, unamiable to the world, for the "world *knoweth* them not," and does not like them though it can hardly tell why; yet (as St. John proceeds) they have this blessing, that "when He shall appear, they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is."

And if, as it would seem, we must choose between the two, surely the world's friendship may be better parted with than our fellowship with our Lord and Saviour. What indeed have we to do with courting men, whose faces are turned towards God? We know how men feel and act when they come to die; they discharge their worldly affairs from their minds, and try to realize the unseen state. Then this world is nothing to them. It may praise, it may blame; but they feel it not. They are leaving their goods, their deeds, their sayings, their writings, their names, behind them; and they care not for it, for they wait for Christ. To one thing alone they are alive, His coming; they watch against it, if so be they may then be found without shame. Such is the conduct of dying men; and what all but the very hardened do at the last, if their senses fail not and their powers hold, that does the true Christian all life long. He is ever dying

while he lives ; he is on his bier, and the prayers for the sick are saying over him. He has no work but that of making his peace with God, and preparing for the judgment. He has no aim but that of being found worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man. And therefore day by day he unlearns the love of this world, and the desire of its praise ; he can bear to belong to the nameless family of God, and to seem to the world strange in it and out of place, for so he is.

And when Christ comes at last, blessed indeed will be his lot. He has joined himself from the first to the conquering side ; he has risked the present against the future, preferring the chance of eternity to the certainty of time ; and then his reward will be but beginning, when that of the children of this world is come to an end. In the words of the wise man, "Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of His salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This is he whom we had sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach ; we fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honor. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints !"

## XXIX.

### THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

IRVING.

[In power of originality and eloquence as in stature, EDWARD IRVING towered amidst English preachers a half century ago. In De Quincey's words, he was "unquestionably, by many degrees, the greatest orator of our times." His sincerity and piety are evident; yet the latter years of his ministry were embittered by indiscreet acts, arising, perhaps, from partial insanity. He was born at Annan, Scotland, in 1792, and was educated at the University of Edinburgh. For three years he was an assistant to Dr. Chalmers, in Glasgow, and in 1822 was installed in the Scottish Presbyterian Church, London. Here he enjoyed unbounded popularity, till his encouragement in his congregation of unintelligible rhapsodies as utterances of the Spirit, and alleged misstatements of doctrine, led to his ejection by the Presbytery on the charge of heresy, in 1832. Thence arose the Irvingites, with whose conceits he had little to do. He died in Glasgow of consumption, December 8th 1834.]

*"And from the Lord Jesus Christ."*—Eph. i. 2.

THE grace and peace with which Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ doth bless the saints at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus, proceedeth not from God the Father only, but equally and alike from the Lord Jesus Christ; and this same conjunction of the Father and the Son as the source and origin of all spiritual benefits, our apostle maketh not in one, but in all his epistles, and not he only but also the other apostles. We may never doubt, therefore, from this the constant style of Holy Scripture, that the two Divine Persons thus advanced into equal honor as the fountain of grace and peace, are to be equally acknowledged by the Church, and witnessed to by the saints; that they may not and cannot be separated or contemplated apart: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the

Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." Therefore the gospel is by our apostle called "the mystery of God, and [both] of the Father, and of Christ," (Col. ii. 2.) And by the apostle John it is declared, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall also continue in the Son, and in the Father." (1 John ii. 24.) And again, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (Chap. i. 3.) Into that part and office in the mystery which the Father hath we have inquired diligently in several discourses, and we do now propose, by the help of the Spirit, to testify unto the office of the Son, according as it is contained under His name, Jesus Christ the Lord. Into the mystery of His name, Jesus, we would then with all reverence first inquire.

The name Jesus being written at full length is Jehoshua, which consisteth of two parts—Hoshea, which was the original name of the son of Nun; and Jah, which was added by Moses when he sent him to spy out the land of Canaan. Hoshea is "saviour," or "salvation;" on which account it is said, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. i. 21.) And Jah is a contraction of Jehovah, used singly to denote the whole force of that name in Ps. lxxviii. 4, "Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah;" used along with it to give it force and intensity, in two passages of Isaiah. The first is: "Behold, God is my salvation (Hoshea); I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord (Jah) Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation (Hoshea)." (Chap. xii. 2.) This is a very remarkable passage, both as containing the two parts of the name Jesus, Jah and Hoshea, and as declaring that the Jewish people in the day of their restoration shall say that Jah Jehovah hath become Jah Hoshea, or Jesus their Saviour; and in consequence of this, their confession of the name of Christ, it is

added, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation;" which I understand to signify their abundant and joyful partaking of the Holy Ghost. The other passage in which Jah occurs is to the same effect, and spoken of the same people against the same time,—“We have a strong city: salvation (Hoshea) will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. . . . Trust ye in the Lord (Jehovah) for ever: for in the Lord (Jah) is everlasting strength.” (Chap. xxvi. 1, 4.) This separation of Jah, a part of the name Jehovah, from the rest; and this use of it in the separate form always in connection with the idea of salvation, and hence with the very word Hoshea, I cannot but regard as a preparation for that combination and composition of the word into the one name Jehoshua, which in the type had been already done by an act of God’s minister, and in the antitype was about to be done by the act of God himself. I observe further, that Hoshea had his name changed when he went to spy out the land of Canaan, the inheritance which God had by the covenant of Sinai set apart unto the seed of Abraham. The son of Nun had already, so to speak, won his name of “saviour,” by the various battles wherein God had given him to smite the enemies of Israel; but the name of Jehoshua he had to win for himself, by going into the enemy’s land and bringing out of it a faithful and good report, which was to signify that the Son of God upon coming into this world, which God hath intended for an inheritance of His saints, should have the name of Jesus given to Him, and should earn the like, not by reporting it able to be taken, but by purchasing it to himself out of the hands of the enemy, and acquiring the right to it for His people, against the dispensation of the fullness of the times, when the purchased possession shall be redeemed. These being the component parts of the name Jesus, let us now inquire into the meaning of each of them; for it is by understand-



ing the name of the Son that we shall understand His person and His offices in the blessed Trinity.

The name Jah or Jehovah is sufficiently explained to us in that which the Lord spake unto Moses from the midst of the bush,—“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you,” (Exod. iii. 14); which teacheth us that self-existent, underived, unchangeable, self-sufficient being is that which is contained under the name Jehovah: self-existent in himself, underived from any higher origin, and unchangeable by any cause; all-sufficient in himself, and therefore the origin, the changer, and the sufficiency of every other existing person and thing. This incommunicable name the Jews held to be unutterably sacred, and would by no means name it, but retained it in the mysterious holiness of impenetrable silence; and whenever it occurred in the text they pronounced in its stead some of the appellations of God,—a fond conceit, which degenerated at length into a base superstition, yet worthy to be mentioned as teaching us the opinion of the nation that in this name lay folded up, as it were, the very essence and substance of that Divine Being, of whom all the other names expressed only the attributes. There might also perhaps be concealed under this rabbinical conceit another act of worship done unto Moses and the Mosaic economy, with a view to which this name was assumed: as it is written in Exod. vi. 3,—“I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” This name Almighty, or Elohim, is proper to God as the maker of all the creatures, ere yet He had revealed himself as the chooser out and redeemer of a part of the fallen creatures, and was most proper to preserve men from running into the worship of the creature, by continually declaring that it was made by another than itself; but when God began to manifest His purpose according to

election by the calling out of Abraham, and His salvation of a Church from the wrecks of fallen nature by the imputation of a righteousness not inherent in it, but derived from Him, then He added to the name of God, the Creator of all, the special and peculiar propriety which He had in His chosen ones, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," and appointing the same for a memorial unto all generations; because this Church portion, the saved portion of the fallen creatures, shall endure unto all ages, and constitute God's most excellent and glorious inheritance. But, at the call of Moses, being about to institute a covenant wherein He was to pledge Himself to ten thousand things, whereof not one was to be perfectly accomplished until after a hundred ages of sore contradiction and oppression, He thinketh it good to take unto Himself a name which shall be expressive of constancy and faithfulness in the highest possible sense,—a name which every one that knew it might trust; a name which should signify the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And this name is Jehovah, of which Jah, the essence, hath been compounded into Jesus. By which component part, therefore, it is signified that the Jehovah of the covenant was no other than the Son, the same Divine Person who animated the child of the virgin; and that all things which were spoken by Jehovah, Jesus undertaketh to fulfil. That word Jah, incorporated with Hoshea in the name of our blessed Lord, is to me a pledge that all things which are written in the law and the prophets the Son of man hath come not to destroy but to fulfil. And accordingly we do find that Jesus hath applied to Him the essential meaning of Jehovah, which is independence on all outward causes, and unalterable by time, as in Rev. xiii. 8,— "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And again (Heb. i. 10), quoting from Psalm cii., "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall

perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." And, not to enumerate more instances, it is said of Christ (Rev. i. 8), what had just been said of the Father,—“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty,—an expression which some have thought to be no more than a translation into Greek of the Hebrew words Jehovah Elohim, or the Lord God. Unto this much have we attained, therefore, that all the might and holiness, all the magnificence of power and splendor of operation, all the faithfulness and immovableness of purpose, together with all words whatsoever written of Jehovah and the old dispensation, are the property of Him who hath revealed himself under the new as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, the meek, the humble, and the lowly Jesus.

The second part of this blessed name Jehoshua is Hoshea, which signifies salvation, and was added to the name Jah when the person of the Son united itself to the substance of the fallen creature for the end of redeeming and saving it; wherefore in this form of the God-man, while yet only conceived but not born, He is called Jesus, “for He shall save His people from their sins.” Though Jehovah had been known under the law as a great deliverer of His people from manifold oppressions, these deliverances had all been frustrated by their persevering disobedience, and they were now sold under the sorest bondage of all which they had ever proved, a bondage which endureth unto this day. He was known to them as yet, therefore, not as their Saviour but as their Judge, and the avenger of their wickedness. Nevertheless, in the mouth of all the prophets He had upon all occasions, and especially upon the eve of each new trial, assured them with the promise of a new and everlasting cove-

nant, under which He would be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and would remember their iniquities no more, when the sin of Judah and of Israel should be sought for and should not be found; and when, together with all sin, all suffering and oppression should pass away. To execute these promises and to bring in this dispensation of eternal salvation, the virgin's Son had been promised both by Isaiah and Jeremiah; and now that the virgin's Child is conceived He receiveth the name of Jah Hoshea, Jehovah the Saviour, to assure the faithful that He, and none but He, would accomplish all these things; and accordingly Zecharias, when his tongue was loosed, did prophesy of Him in these words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people: and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David: as he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began." To this deliverance not yet accomplished unto the Jewish people, to this salvation from their sins under the penalty of which they are still suffering, there can be no doubt that the name Jesus hath a primary reference, and that it was thus understood both by the blessed virgin and by the prophet Zecharias. It would not have been proper to the Jewish economy, still in existence, to have spoken otherwise of Messiah than as He had been spoken of by all the prophets; and if He had been spoken of to them in the higher sense in which we are now to contemplate His salvation, it would have been to them unintelligible. The sense I mean is that in which all believers look upon Him as their Saviour in taking away their guilt and their judgment, and regenerating their natures, and raising them from the dead to the inheritance of eternal life and blessedness. In this higher sense of the Redeemer of the fallen creatures whom God hath chosen unto life eternal, the Jewish people were not privileged to perceive Him otherwise than through the emblems of their state and nature, and by

these emblems it shall yet be taught them against the day of their glory; but to us, taught by the Spirit, it is given to understand how Jehovah became the Saviour that instant He united Himself to the seed of the woman. In taking a part of the fallen creature into union with himself and saving that part from the pollution of sin, the corruption of the grave, and the power of Satan, He gave assurance that God was with Him, and in Him wrought this same thing for His own glory; gave assurance that He was both purposed and able to redeem and restore with greater glory the fallen creature, to save it from sin and death, to bless it with holiness and eternal life. When the Son of God took flesh, He entered upon the travail of salvation; when He carried that flesh triumphant to the right hand of God, he finished the work. By saving His own human nature, by preserving it from the taint of sin, by delivering it from the power of Satan, by carrying it into the region of glory, He did obtain eternal redemption for us, He did receive power to destroy him that had the power of death, and to deliver all them who through the fear of death were subject to bondage. This power of saving others proceedeth from His saving of himself. He voluntarily brought himself into peril by taking to himself our nature; by being incarnate He became the champion of our salvation, by enduring the incarnation and overcoming all the creature's fallen condition, He accomplished our salvation; and from thenceforth He standeth alone the head of salvation, as He had been the head of creation,—not only Jehovah Elohim, the Lord God, but Jehovah Hoshea, the Lord the Saviour. Now this voluntary peril which the Son of God undertook was for the greatest ends of the creature's glory and of the creature's well-being,—seeing God's glory as the Creator had been obscured, and the creature's goodly condition subverted by the fall; and therefore Jehovah is not fully manifested as the Saviour until all the effects of the fall shall have been

clean wrought out of creation, and the handiwork of God shall stand sinless and glorious for ever. The name Jesus, therefore, carries us far beyond anything which we behold as yet accomplished, into the future everlasting condition of God's works, when everything that defileth and maketh a lie shall be purged off into the second death of the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever, and the heavens and earth which now are defiled and obscure shall with all their inhabitants, in the estate of infallible blessedness, acknowledge Jehovah their Creator to be also Jehovah their Saviour. Save upon that human nature which He assumed, I may say that the virtue and power of the name Jesus hath not yet been exhibited. In this kind the whole work has been finished by the wonderful act of taking our nature, and going down with it into the region, first, of all temptation, and next of the grave or all corruption, and thence fetching it up and seating it in the place of all honor and all blessedness. This exaltation which will yet be done upon all the chosen ones of God, and upon all that dependeth from them in their several degrees, hath as yet been only partially done upon any one of the saints, whose souls, though they be in glory, have left their bodies under the corruption of the grave—sad memorial of their sinfulness! And we who being now in the body have the first fruits of the Spirit, do nevertheless groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body: and all the creatures groan and travail together under bondage, waiting for that same glorious manifestation of the sons of God. And if so be that the name Jesus implies salvation from that curse and thralldom of sin under which the creation is now fallen, who will say that the name will be acquitted of its full blessedness until the bodies of the saints be brought up from their graves, and the world delivered from the headship of Satan and the power of death? Now as His being born of the virgin, and manifested as the seed of

David, gave the beginning to the great work of our salvation, considered as shut up and represented in His human nature; and as the resurrection of His body from the dead gave the beginning to the work of conveying and communicating the same salvation to an elect few individuals in the gift of the Holy Ghost; even so His work of saving the Jewish nation from the hand of all their enemies will be the beginning of the work of delivering mankind from the dominion of Satan, and His being brought again into the world shall be the signal for delivering the bodies of His Church from the power of the grave. After which it only remaineth that by the judgment He should deliver all things created from the power of death; and then is the glorious name of Jesus, or Jah the Saviour, acquitted of its most precious burden.

Thus have I endeavored, dear brethren, to set forth unto you the meaning of the name Jesus, which the Godhead assumed in the act of taking unto itself the substance of the fallen creature, in order to save what of the fallen creatures it pleased Him to save. And now I would, by the grace of God, endeavor to draw out from what hath been said certain conclusions of doctrine and practical inferences, which the Lord may be pleased to bless unto your edification in knowledge, in faith, and in new obedience.

First, then, it is manifest from God's revealing himself as Jesus, or the Saviour, that the creatures are in a state of condemnation and of perdition; otherwise what meaning were there in revealing himself as their Saviour? As the name Elohim, or God the Almighty One, implies that every other one is not almighty, but of a limited power and subordinate place; and as the name Jehovah, or the Unchangeable One, implieth that all other beings are to undergo change and alteration according to His will; so doth the name Jesus, or Saviour, imply that all other beings whatsoever are in a state of condemnation and misery, from under which they

need to be saved. And whence cometh this state of misery and perdition is distinctly and directly revealed in the act of giving unto Him the name,—“Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” Be it known unto you, therefore, brethren, and of this be ye steadfastly assured, that our sins have divided between us and God, and brought us under the dominion of death and the grave, and the resurrection unto judgment, and the sentence of the second death, which nothing can avert, from which nothing can deliver and save us, but trust upon the name of Jesus, and believing in God as the only Saviour from our sins. Put away, therefore, from amongst you all confidence which is elsewhere rested than upon the name of Jesus, and otherwise proceedeth than through faith in the incarnation, and obedience, and death, and burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be ye assured, that if God spared not His own Son when He had assumed our fallen nature, and become a partaker of flesh and blood with the rest of the brethren, that He will not spare us who have no divine community of substance with the Father, who have no eternal generation by the Father, who have no inhabitation of the Father’s bosom, and participation of his counsel, to interest the Father for our sakes; and if these being present in Jesus did not avert the sword of God from smiting the Shepherd, oh, how think you that we rebellious creatures can ever escape if we should neglect such great salvation! If over Him the law laid its line of righteousness, and its plumb-line of judgment, exacting obedience unto every jot and tittle of its holy, just, and good commandments, shall it, oh, can it, be relaxed unto such as we are! If the holiness of God was not prevented from its action and infliction upon Him who was the manifestation of His love, and grace, and glory, how shall it, how can it be silent, be inactive, be changed towards us, who are manifestations of rebellion, ingratitude, unfruitfulness, and sin! Say then, believe then, know then,



and be assured that in the way of God's holiness and justice, in the way of His law and our obedience thereto, there is nothing but condemnation and perdition for ever and for ever. Acknowledge this, and have no confidence in the flesh, or in the powers of the natural man. Say, "I am indeed a sinner, and the chief of sinners; my righteousnesses are as filthy rags; in all things I come short of the glory of God; in my best estate I am but vanity. I have been feeding upon the east wind while I trusted in my own works; and I shall continue to feed on the east wind, be parched, be blighted, be shrivelled up like the tree of the wilderness over which the east wind bloweth, so long as I shall look for any righteousness or hope for any salvation through anything which I can do for myself, or which others can do for me. I am a condemned man; I can ask no second trial; my mouth is shut, my doom is written, my fate is sealed." This, even this, no less, is what I require of you to believe, and to feel as the just conclusion from the name of Jesus, which the eternal revealer of God, even the Son, hath taken unto Himself under the gospel dispensation.

And now, in the second place, I call upon you to believe and to feel, that unto a world thus sealed and set apart unto condemnation God hath revealed himself as a Saviour. As He did reveal himself its Creator, so now revealeth He himself its Saviour; and this message of reconciliation hath He committed unto me His minister to make known unto you all, that albeit ye are guilty before Him, and have no plea in your mouth, He is of such wondrous grace, and hath for the creatures of His hand such pitiful love and tender compassion, being a Sovereign withal whom no one can question, saying, "What doest Thou?" that He hath given His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life; that He is in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not impu-

ting unto men their trespasses. Believe, then, though all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, you are justified "freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." As in my former conclusion of doctrine and practice I did entreat you to be separate from all creature trust, and to regard the whole creation of God as under the bondage of sin and death, lying in the wicked one; so now do I entreat and invoke you to look unto Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of your faith. Receive the grace of God by Him preached, and from Him proceeding forth. Receive the pardon of your guilt written in His blood and sealed with the key of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, which shutteth and no man openeth. As the prisoner no more doubteth when the reprieve of his sovereign cometh under the great seal of the kingdom by the hands of the king's proper messenger; so doubt ye no more, let the world doubt no more after it hath received the good news of salvation by the Son of God, to this very end appointed by His name Jesus, and for the assurance of this very thing constituted by His union, His inseparable and indivisible union with the nature of the creatures which had been imprisoned under the sentence of the law of the Jehovah King, the Unchangeable One. Ah! is it not as if to some poor, doubting, disbelieving woman under sentence of death, the king's son, that he might give her fast assurance and chase away her despair, should wed himself to her, join himself as one, that her poor fainting heart, might be reassured? So did Christ, in order to convince the children of mother Eve, who in their mother's transgression had transgressed, and in their mother's sentence had been doomed,

come and wed himself, His eternal divinity, unto the seed of mother Eve, that the family, all the family, might truly know and feel assured that they had found grace in the sight of God, and were beloved because He is Love, and can love what in itself is all unlovely. And now I ask you to believe that you are saved in Christ; to rejoice and hold up your heads, because you are redeemed; to go on and rejoice, and prosper, and do exploits under that banner of salvation which He hath displayed because of the truth.

And now, finally, with respect to the manner of conveying this salvation which He wrought out by His obedience unto the death, we have to observe that it is not by giving out of himself unto another, but by bringing that other into himself that the communication of the blessedness proceedeth. To give unto us an existence out of himself is the work of creation. To bring the thing created into union, into oneness with himself, is the work of redemption, which therefore proceeded by joining unto himself, by taking up into hypostatical union with himself the nature of man. And every one who is redeemed is in like manner taken up into union with His human nature, so as to be one with Him as He is one with the Father. But this union of the redeemed ones unto Christ is not of the same kind as the union of His human nature unto His divine. The human nature of Christ is a part of His personal, and shall continue so for ever; but not so is it with His saved ones, who are separate persons from Christ, though of the same substance with His human nature unto which they are consubstantiated by the Holy Ghost proceeding from Him to this very end of bringing them into union with Him, just as the seed of plants hath power to assimilate unto itself the elemental substances on which it feeds, and so to produce many seeds and many plants of the like kind. Or to preserve our similitude still more correct, as the one stem of the vine hath power through the appropriation unto itself of elemental matters

to put forth many branches, whereon grow the clusters of ripe fruit; so doth Christ the true vine of the Father's planting, of the Father's dressing, by operation of the Holy Spirit upon the creature produce many separate persons in His own likeness, many branches growing out of and unto himself. In their union with Him standeth their fertility, and being separated from Him they are good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of men. The Holy Spirit, therefore, which proceedeth from Christ doth unite us unto Christ, and enable us to abide in Him,—doth not unite us unto the Godhead of the Son, but doth unite us to the manhood of Christ. And the completeness of the saved ones will be accomplished at His coming; after which, if I err not, the manner of this salvation will somewhat change. For I reckon there is a dignity and a closeness in the union between Christ and His elect or bridal Church which now is suffering with Him and for Him, that there is not between Him and the numerous hosts which shall come and be joined unto Him in the age to come, of which He is declared to be the Father; whereas of the Church that now is, He is the husband. But still as the children are of the same substance with their parents, so shall the innumerable company of the saints in the age to come be taken out of the stock of an evil nature subject unto death, and brought into the stock of a redeemed nature which hath triumphed over death; and so all the saved ones are saved by being taken out of the sinful mass and consubstantiated with that atom, so to speak, of redeemed substance which the Son joined unto himself, and which the Father gave to have life in itself. And as Christ the great quickener, the eternal life manifested, doth thus draw unto himself those whom the Father giveth Him out of that separateness and wickedness in which they are by nature, and so doth save them in himself, not out of himself; even in like manner do these same saved

ones draw up along with them this world which was made for man, with its sun, and moon, and stars, and fish and flying fowl, and living creatures, to the utter exclusion of death and extinction of sin and misery; and then the work of creation will appear to have been but the rudiments of and preparation for the work of redemption by the manifestation of Jehovah under the name of Jesus.

And now, brethren, before I close, allow me to express, in a few words, the heartfelt satisfaction with which I return to my charge over your souls, and to the labors of the ministry in this city. The tidings which I received from time to time of your love and fellowship in the Lord, of your constancy in the duties of public worship, did afford me great consolation in my absence; and a good report concerning you is, I may say, spread abroad amongst the churches. In which let us rejoice together. Let us remark with gratitude the hand of God in sending amongst us ministers of good and honorable report, in whose mouth the substance of the doctrine which I teach hath been confirmed. And now let us proceed with renewed confidence in the great Head of the Church, to hold up in this city a banner for the truth. Let us go on unto perfection, and not stop until we reach the stature of a perfect man in Christ. You may desire naturally to know what reception the word which I preached met with in our native land and in our mother Church. Everywhere, I may truly say, the people heard me gladly, and from the ministers of the gospel I received much brotherly kindness; for all which I return thanks this day to the great Head of the Church. I preached unto them the coming of the Lord in judgment, little thinking that I should witness any act of His judgment; but so it was, the Lord did lift up His hand and make a breach in the midst of the congregation. It is a fearful thing, let me tell you, brethren, to witness such an awful sight; but oh,

if those days of judgment and of visitation be so near at hand, what sights more awful await our eyes! If those days be at hand concerning which it is said, that unless they were shortened no flesh should be saved, oh, then, what death, what destruction, what ruin, may we not be prepared to see! Enter, oh enter, then, into your chambers, ye people of the Lord, and shut your doors and hide yourselves as it were for a little moment until the indignation be overpast. Have I not preached unto you this day the name of Jesus, that Rock of refuge and high tower of salvation? Flee unto Him speedily, speedily, who hath been the dwelling-place of His people in all generations. Everything shall change but Jehovah, everything shall perish which is not united unto Jehovah the Saviour. There is no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved but the name of Jesus; and every one who knoweth His name will put his trust in Him. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Amen. and amen.

## XXX.

### ON CHRISTIAN LOVE.

LATIMER.

[HUGH LATIMER was a sincere, bold, and blunt minister of Christ, apt in homely yet spirited figures of speech, and quick to rebuke the crying evils of his generation. The fear of man or despotic king never kept back a word of his sharp censure. Born at Thurcaston, in Leicestershire, about 1491, he graduated at eighteen from Cambridge. "I was as obstinate a papist as any in England," he relates of his early manhood; yet he became an inflexible reformer in his thirty-first year. Henry VIII. made him Bishop of Worcester in 1535; but Latimer was forced by conscience to resign four years later. In the brief reign of good Edward VI., he delighted the common people by re-entering the pulpit. On the accession of "bloody Mary," he was condemned as a heretic, and burned at the stake with Bishop Ridley, opposite Baliol College, Oxford, October 16th 1555. His last and prophetic words were: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out. O Father of heaven, receive my soul!" His works, mainly Sermons, are published by the "Parker Society," and also in the series of "British Reformers." This discourse was preached three years before his death.]

*"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you."*—John xv. 12.

SEEING the time is so far spent, we will take no more in hand at this time, than this one sentence; for it will be enough for us to consider this well, and to bear it away with us. "This I command unto you, that ye love one another." Our Saviour himself spake these words at his last supper: it was the last sermon that he made unto his disciples before his departure; it is a very long sermon. For our Saviour, like as one that knows he shall die shortly, is desirous to spend that little time that he has with his friends, in exhort-

ing and instructing them how they should lead their lives. Now among other things that he commanded, this was one: "This I command unto you, that ye love one another." The English expresses as though it were but one, "This is my commandment." I examined the Greek, where it is in the plural number, and very well; for there are many things that pertain to a Christian man, and yet all those things are contained in this one thing, that is, LOVE. He lappeth up all things in love.

Our whole duty is contained in these words, "Love together." Therefore St. Paul saith, "He that loveth another, fulfilleth the whole law;" so it appeareth that all things are contained in this word Love. This love is a precious thing; our Saviour saith, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye shall love one another."

So Christ makes love his cognisance, his badge, his livery. Like as every lord commonly gives a certain livery to his servants, whereby they may be known that they pertain unto him; and so we say, yonder is this lord's servants, because they wear his livery: so our Saviour, who is the Lord above all lords, would have his servants known by their liveries and badge, which badge is love alone. Whosoever now is endued with love and charity, is his servant; him we may call Christ's servant; for love is the token whereby you may know that such a servant pertaineth to Christ; so that charity may be called the very livery of Christ. He that hath charity is Christ's servant: he that hath not charity, is the servant of the devil. For as Christ's livery is love and charity, so the devil's livery is hatred, malice, and discord.

But I think the devil has a great many more servants than Christ has; for there are a great many more in his livery than in Christ's livery; there are but very few who are endued with Christ's livery; with love and charity, gentleness and meekness of spirit; but there are a great num-



ber that bear hatred and malice in their hearts, that are proud, stout, and lofty; therefore the number of the devil's servants is greater than the number of Christ's servants.

Now St. Paul shows how needful this love is. I speak not of carnal love, which is only animal affection; but of this charitable love which is so necessary, that when a man hath it, without all other things it will suffice him. Again, if a man have all other things and lacketh that love, it will not help him, it is all vain and lost. St. Paul used it so: "Though I speak with tongues of men and angels, and yet had no love, I were even as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal. And though I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge; yea, if I had all faith, so that I could move mountains out of their places, and yet had no love, I were nothing. And though I bestowed all my goods to feed the poor, and though I gave my body even that I were burned, and yet had no love, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. xiii.) These are godly gifts, yet St. Paul calls them nothing when a man hath them without charity; which is a great commendation, and shows the great need of love, insomuch that all other virtues are in vain when this love is absent. And there have been some who thought that St. Paul spake against the dignity of faith; but you must understand that St. Paul speaks here not of the justifying faith, wherewith we receive everlasting life, but he understands by this word faith, the gift to do miracles, to remove hills; of such a faith he speaks. This I say to confirm this proposition. Faith only justifieth: this proposition is most true and certain. And St. Paul speaks not here of this lively justifying faith; for this right faith is not without love, for love cometh and floweth out of faith, love is a child of faith; for no man can love except he believe, so that they have two several offices, they themselves being inseparable.

St. Paul has an expression in the 13th chapter of the

first of the Corinthians, which, according to the outward letter, seems much to the dispraise of this faith, and to the praise of love; these are his words, "Now abideth faith, hope, and love, even these three; but the chiefest of these is love." There are some learned men, who expound the greatness of which St. Paul speaketh here, as if meant for eternity. For when we come to God, then we believe no more, but rather see with our eyes face to face how he is; yet for all that, love remains still; so that love may be called the chiefest, because she endureth for ever. And though she is the chiefest, yet we must not attribute unto her the office which pertains unto faith only. Like as I cannot say, the mayor of Stamford must make me a pair of shoes because he is a greater man than the shoemaker is; for the mayor, though he is the greater man, yet it is not his office to make shoes; so though love be greater, yet it is not her office to save. Thus much I thought good to say against those who fight against the truth.

Now, when we would know who are in Christ's livery or not, we must learn it of St. Paul, who most evidently described charity, which is the very livery, saying, "Love is patient, she suffereth long." Now whosoever fumeth and is angry, he is out of this livery: therefore let us remember that we do not cast away the livery of Christ our master. When we are in sickness or any manner of adversities, our duty is to be patient, to suffer willingly, and to call upon him for aid, help, and comfort; for without him we are not able to abide any tribulation. Therefore we must call upon God, he has promised to help: therefore let me not think him to be false or untrue in his promises, for we cannot dishonor God more than by not believing or trusting in him. Therefore let us beware above all things of dishonoring God; and so we must be patient, trusting and most certainly believing that he will deliver us when it seems good to him, who knows the time better than we ourselves.

"Charity is gentle, friendly, and loving; she envieth not." They that envy their neighbor's profit when it goes well with him, such fellows are out of their liveries, and so out of the service of God; for to be envious is to be the servant of the devil.

"Love doth not frowardly, she is not a provoker;" as there are some men who will provoke their neighbor so far that it is very hard for them to be in charity with them; but we must wrestle with our affections; we must strive and see that we keep this livery of Christ our master; for "the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking to take us at a vantage," to bring us out of our liveries, and to take from us the knot of love and charity.

"Love swelleth not, is not puffed up;" but there are many swellers now-a-days, they are so high, so lofty, insomuch that they despise and condemn all others: all such persons are under the governance of the devil. God rules not them with his good Spirit; the evil spirit has occupied their hearts and possessed them.

"She doth not dishonestly; she seeketh not her own; she doth all things to the commodity of her neighbors." A charitable man will not promote himself with the damage of his neighbor. They that seek only their own advantage, forgetting their neighbors, they are not of God, they have not his livery. Further, "charity is not provoked to anger; she thinketh not evil." We ought not to think evil of our neighbor, as long as we see not open wickedness; for it is written, "You shall not judge;" we should not take upon us to condemn our neighbor. And surely the condemners of other men's works are not in the livery of Christ. Christ hateth them.

"She rejoiceth not in iniquity;" she loveth equity and godliness. And again, she is sorry to hear of falsehood, of stealing, or such like, which wickedness is now at this time commonly used. There never was such falsehood among

Christian men as there is now, at this time; truly I think, and they that have experience report it so, that among the very Infidels and Turks there is more fidelity and uprightness than among Christian men. For no man setteth anything by his promise, yea, and writings will not serve with some, they are so shameless that they dare deny their own handwriting: but, I pray you, are those false fellows in the livery of Christ? Have they his cognisance? No, no; they have the badge of the devil, with whom they shall be damned world without end, except they amend and leave their wickedness.

“She suffereth all things; she believeth all things.” It is a great matter that should make us to be grieved with our neighbor; we should be patient when our neighbor doth wrong, we should admonish him of his folly, earnestly desiring him to leave his wickedness, showing the danger that follows, namely, everlasting damnation. In such wise we should study to amend our neighbor, and not to hate him or do him a foul turn again, but rather charitably study to amend him: whosoever now does so, he has the livery and cognisance of Christ, he shall be known at the last day for his servant.

“Love believeth all things:” it appears daily that they who are charitable and friendly are most deceived; because they think well of every man, they believe every man, they trust their words, and therefore are most deceived in this world, among the children of the devil. These and such like things are the tokens of the right and godly love: therefore they that have this love are soon known, for this love cannot be hid in corners, she has her operation: therefore all that have her are well enough, though they have no other gifts besides her. Again, they that lack her, though they have many other gifts besides, yet is it to no other purpose, it does them no good: for when we shall come at the great day before him, not having this livery (that is love) with us,

then we are lost; he will not take us for his servants, because we have not his cognisance. But if we have this livery, if we wear his cognisance here in this world; that is, if we love our neighbor, help him in his distress, are charitable, loving, and friendly unto him, then we shall be known at the last day: but if we be uncharitable towards our neighbor, hate him, seek our own advantage with his damage, then we shall be rejected of Christ and so damned world without end.

Our Saviour saith here in this gospel, "I command you these things:" he speaketh in the plural number, and lappeth it up in one thing, which is, that we should love one another, much like St. Paul's saying in the thirteenth to the Romans, "Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another." Here St. Paul lappeth up all things together, signifying unto us, that love is the consummation of the law; for this commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is contained in this law of love: for he that loveth God will not break wedlock, because wedlock breaking is a dishonoring of God and a serving of the devil. "Thou shalt not kill:" he that loveth will not kill, he will do no harm. "Thou shalt not steal;" he that loveth his neighbor as himself, will not take away his goods. I had of late occasion to speak of picking and stealing, where I showed unto you the danger wherein they are that steal their neighbors' goods from them, but I hear nothing yet of restitution. Sirs, I tell you, except restitution is made, look for no salvation. And it is a miserable and heinous thing to consider that we are so blinded with this world, that rather than we would make restitution, we will sell unto the devil our souls which are bought with the blood of our Saviour Christ. What can be done more to the dishonoring of Christ, than to cast our souls away to the devil for the value of a little money?—the soul which he has bought with his painful passion and death! But I tell you those that will do so, and that will not

make restitution when they have done wrong, or have taken away their neighbor's goods, they are not in the livery of Christ, they are not his servants; let them go as they will in this world, yet for all that they are foul and filthy enough before God; they stink before his face; and therefore they shall be cast from his presence into everlasting fire; this shall be all their good cheer that they shall have, because they have not the livery of Christ, nor his cognisance, which is love. They remember not that Christ commanded us, saying, "This I command you, that ye love one another." This is Christ's commandment. Moses, the great prophet of God, gave many laws, but he gave not the Spirit to fulfil the same laws: but Christ gave this law, and promised unto us, that when we call upon him he will give us his Holy Ghost, who shall make us able to fulfil his laws, though not so perfectly as the law requires; but yet to the contentation of God, and to the protection of our faith: for as long as we are in this world, we can do nothing as we ought to do, because our flesh leadeth us, which is ever bent against the law of God; yet our works which we do are well taken for Christ's sake, and God will reward them in heaven.

Therefore our Saviour saith, "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," because he helpeth to bear them; else indeed we should not be able to bear them. And in another place he saith, "his commandments are not heavy;" they are heavy to our flesh, but being qualified with the Spirit of God, to the faithful which believe in Christ, to them, I say, they are not heavy; for though their doings are not perfect, yet they are well taken for Christ's sake.

You must not be offended because the Scripture commends love so highly, for he that commends the daughter, commends the mother; for love is the daughter, and faith is the mother: love floweth out of faith; where faith is, there is love; but yet we must consider their offices, faith is the hand wherewith we take hold on everlasting life.

Now let us enter into ourselves, and examine our own hearts, whether we are in the livery of God, or not: and when we find ourselves to be out of this livery, let us repent and amend our lives, so that we may come again to the favor of God, and spend our time in this world to his honor and glory, forgiving our neighbors all such things as they have done against us.

And now to make an end: mark here who gave this precept of love—Christ our Saviour himself. When and at what time? At his departing, when he should suffer death. Therefore these words ought the more to be regarded, seeing he himself spake them at his last departing from us. May God of his mercy give us grace so to walk here in this world, charitably and friendly one with another, that we may attain the joy which God hath prepared for all those that love him. Amen.

## XXXI.

### FURY NOT IN GOD.

CHALMERS.

[A philosopher, theologian, pulpit orator, and pastor—gifted, earnest, and faithful to a tender conscience in each of these responsible spheres—such was the life-character of THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D., D. C. L. His career was full of godly labors for the good of humanity. Born at Anstruther, in Fifeshire, Scotland, March 17th 1780, and educated at St. Andrew's, he was licensed a minister of the Church of Scotland in his nineteenth year. His true conversion to God, however, he himself assigns to the year 1810. An excellent article on the "Evidences of Christianity," prepared for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia, and a series of glowing "Astronomical Discourses," are the most popular of his writings, which extend to thirty volumes. As pastor over a parish of two thousand poor families in Glasgow, he organized it into twenty-five districts with supervisors, established week-day and Sunday schools, and faithfully toiled for their spiritual and bodily necessities. Five years were given to the professorship of Moral Philosophy, and fifteen to that of Theology, in the University of Edinburgh. In 1843 Dr. Chalmers was a leader of the Evangelical party which, for conscience' sake, seceded to found the Free Church, and he did much for its rapid establishment. He died in Edinburgh, May 30th 1847. Memoirs of his life were written by Dr. Hanna and Dr. Wayland. Four volumes of his Sermons are published. One is illustrative of different stages of his ministry; and from that is selected the following masterpiece—a favorite of Dr. Chalmers, and last preached a year before his death.]

*"Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me."*—Isaiah xxvii. 4-5.

THERE are three distinct lessons in this text. The first, that fury is not in God: the second, that He does not want to glorify Himself by the death of sinners—"Who would



set the thorns and briers against me in battle?" the third, the invitation—"Take hold of my strength, that you may make peace with me; and you shall make peace with me."

I. First, then, Fury is not in God. But how can this be? is not fury one manifestation of His essential attributes? do we not repeatedly read of His fury—of Jerusalem being full of the fury of the Lord—of God casting the fury of His wrath upon the world—of Him rendering His anger upon His enemies with fury—of Him accomplishing his fury upon Zion—of Him causing His fury to rest on the bloody and devoted city? We are not therefore to think that fury is banished altogether from God's administration. There are times and occasions when this fury is discharged upon the objects of it; and there must be other times and other occasions when there is no fury in Him. Now, what is the occasion upon which He disclaims all fury in our text? He is inviting men to reconciliation; He is calling upon them to make peace; and He is assuring them, that if they will only take hold of His strength, they shall make peace with Him. In the preceding verses He speaks of a vineyard; and in the act of inviting people to lay hold of His strength, He is in fact inviting those who are without the limits of the vineyard to enter in. Fury will be discharged on those who reject the invitation. But we cannot say that there is any exercise of fury in God at the time of giving the invitation. There is the most visible and direct contrary. There is a longing desire after you. There is a wish to save you from that day in which the fury of a rejected Saviour will be spread abroad over all who have despised Him. The tone of invitation is not a tone of anger—it is a tone of tenderness. The look which accompanies the invitation is not a look of wrath—it is a look of affection. There may be a time, there may be an occasion, when the fury of God will be put forth on the men who have held out against Him, and turned them away in infidelity and contempt from His be-

seeching voice; but at the time that He is lifting this voice—at the time that He is sending messengers over the face of the earth to circulate it among the habitations of men—at the time particularly among ourselves, when in our own place and our own day Bibles are within the reach of every family, and ministers in every pulpit are sounding forth the overtures of the gospel throughout the land—surely at such a time and upon such an occasion, it may well be said of God to all who are now seeking His face and favor, that there is no fury in Him.

It is just as in the parable of the marriage feast: many rejected the invitation which the king gave to it—for which he was wroth with them, and sent forth his armies and destroyed them, and burned up their city. On that occasion there was fury in the king, and on the like occasion will there be fury in God. But well can He say at the time when He is now giving the invitation—there is no fury in Me. There is kindness—a desire for peace and friendship—a longing earnestness to make up the quarrel which now subsists between the Lawgiver in heaven, and His yet impenitent and unreconciled creatures.

This very process was all gone through at and before the destruction of Jerusalem. It rejected the warnings and invitations of the Saviour, and at length experienced His fury. But there was no fury at the time of His giving the invitations. The tone of our Saviour's voice when He uttered—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," was not the tone of a vindictive and irritated fury. There was compassion in it—a warning and pleading earnestness that they would mind the things which belong to their peace; and at that time when He would willingly have gathered them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—then may it well be said that there was no fury in the Son of God, no fury in God.

Let us make the application to ourselves in the present day. On the last day there will be a tremendous discharge

of fury. That wrath which sinners are now doing so much to treasure up will all be poured forth on them. The season of God's mercy will then have come to an end; and after the sound of the last trumpet, there will never more be heard the sounding call of reconciliation. Oh, my brethren, that God who is grieved and who is angry with sinners every day, will in the last day pour it all forth in one mighty torrent on the heads of the impenitent. It is now gathering and accumulating in a storehouse of vengeance; and at the awful point in the successive history of nature and providence, when time shall be no more, will the door of this storehouse be opened, that the fury of the Lord may break loose upon the guilty, and accomplish upon them the weight and the terror of all His threatenings. You misunderstand the text, then, my brethren, if you infer from it that fury has no place in the history or methods of God's administration. It has its time and its occasion—and the very greatest display of it is yet to come, when the earth shall be burned up, and the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. It makes one shudder seriously to think that there may be some here present whom this devouring torrent of wrath shall sweep away; some here present who will be drawn into the whirl of destruction, and forced to take their descending way through the mouth of that pit where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; some here present who so far from experiencing in their own persons that there is no fury in God, will find that throughout the dreary extent of one hopeless and endless and unmitigated eternity, it is the only attribute of His they have to do with. But hear me, hear

me ere you have taken your bed in hell; hear me, ere that prison door be shut upon you which is never, never again to be opened! hear me, hear me, ere the great day of the revelation of God's wrath comes round, and there shall be a total breaking up of that system of things which looks at present so stable and so unalterable! On that awful day I might not be able to take up the text and say—that there is no fury in God. But, oh! hear me, for your lives hear me—on this day I can say it. From the place where I now stand I can throw abroad amongst you the wide announcement—that there is no fury in God; and there is not one of you into whose heart this announcement may not enter, and welcome will you be to strike with your beseeching God a league of peace and of friendship that shall never be broken asunder. Surely when I am busy at my delegated employment of holding out the language of entreaty, and of sounding in your ears the tidings of gladness, and of inviting you to enter into the vineyard of God—surely at the time when the messenger of the gospel is thus executing the commission wherewith he is charged and warranted, he may well say—that there is no fury in God. Surely at the time when the Son of God is inviting you to kiss Him and to enter into reconciliation, there is neither the feeling nor the exercise of fury. It is only if you refuse, and if you persist in refusing, and if you suffer all these calls and entreaties to be lost upon you—it is only then that God will execute His fury, and put forth the power of His anger. And therefore He says to us, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." Such, then, is the interesting point of time at which you stand. There is no fury in God at the very time that He is inviting you to flee from it. He is sending forth no blasting influence upon the fig-tree, even though hitherto it had borne no fruit, and been a mere cumberer of the ground, when He says, we shall let it alone for another year, and dig it, and

dress it, and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then let it be afterwards cut down. Now, my brethren, you are all in the situation of this fig-tree; you are for the present let alone; God has purposes of kindness towards every one of you; and as one of His ministers I can now say to you all—that there is no fury in Him. Now when the spiritual husbandman is trying to soften your hearts, he is warranted to make a full use of the argument of my text—that there is no fury in God. Now that the ambassador of Christ is plying you with the offers of grace and of strength to renew and to make you fruitful, he is surely charged with matter of far different import from wrath and threatening and vengeance. Oh! let not all this spiritual husbandry turn out to be unavailing; let not the offer be made now, and no fruit appear afterwards; let not yours be the fate of the barren and unfruitful fig-tree. The day of the fury of the Lord is approaching. The burning up of this earth and the passing away of these heavens is an event in the history of God's administration to which we are continually drawing nearer; and on that day when the whole of universal nature shall be turned into a heap of ruins, and we shall see the gleam of a mighty conflagration, and shall hear the noise of the framework of creation rending into fragments, and a cry shall be raised from a despairing multitude out of the men of all generations, who have just awoke from their resting-places—and amid all the bustle and consternation that is going on below, such a sight shall be witnessed from the canopy of heaven as will spread silence over the face of the world, and fix and solemnize every individual of its incumbent population. Oh, my brethren, let us not think that on that day when the Judge is to appear charged with the mighty object of vindicating before men and angels the truth and the majesty of God—that the fury of God will not then appear in bright and burning manifestation. But what I have to tell you on this day is, that fury is not in

God—that now is the time of those things which belong to the peace of our eternity; and that if you will only hear on this the day of your merciful visitation, you will be borne off in safety from all those horrors of dissolving nature, and amid the wild war and frenzy of its reeling elements, will be carried by the arms of love to a place of security and everlasting triumph.

II. This brings us to the second head of discourse—God is not wanting to glorify Himself by the death of sinners—“Who would set the thorns and the briers against me in battle?” The wicked and the righteous are often represented in Scripture by figures taken from the vegetable world. The saved and sanctified are called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified. The godly man is said to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth its fruit in its season. The judgment which cometh upon a man is compared to an axe laid to the root of a tree. A tree is said to be known by its fruits; and as a proof that the kind of character of men is specified by the kind of tree in the woods, we read that of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of the bramble-bush gather they grapes. You will observe that the thorn is one of the kinds instanced in the text, and when God says, I would go through them, I would burn them together, He speaks of the destruction which cometh on all who remain in the state of thorns and briers; and this agrees with what we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.”

Thorns and briers are in other places still more directly employed to signify the enemies of God. “And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,” says one of the prophets, “and his Holy One for a flame, and it shall burn and devour His thorns and His briers in one day.” Therefore, when God says in the text, “Who would set the thorns and the briers

against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together," He speaks of the ease wherewith He could accomplish His wrath upon His enemies. They would perish before Him like the moth. They could not stand the lifting up of the red right arm of the displeasure of Almighty God. Why set up, then, a contest so unequal as this? Why put the wicked in battle array against Him who could go through them and devour them in an instant by the breath of His fury? God is saying in the text that this is not what He is wanting. He does not want to set Himself forth as an enemy, or as a strong man armed against them for the battle—it is a battle He is not at all disposed to enter into. The glory He would achieve by a victory over a host so feeble, is not a glory that His heart is at all set upon. Oh, no! ye children of men, He has no pleasure in your death; He is not seeking to magnify himself by the destruction of so paltry a foe; He could devour you in a moment; He could burn you up like stubble; and you mistake it if you think that renown on so poor a field of contest is a renown that He is at all aspiring after. Who would set the grasshoppers in battle array against the giants? Who would set thorns and briars in battle array against God? This is not what He wants: He would rather something else. Be assured, He would rather you were to turn, and to live, and to come into His vineyard, and submit to the regenerating power of His spiritual husbandry, and be changed from the nature of an accursed plant to a tree of righteousness. In the language of the next verse, He would rather that this enemy of His, not yet at peace with Him, and who may therefore be likened to a brier or a thorn—He would rather than he remained so that he should take hold of God's strength, that he may make peace with Him—and as the fruit of his so doing, he shall make peace with Him.

Now tell me if this do not open up a most wonderful and a most inviting view of God? It is the real attitude in which

He puts himself forth to us in the gospel of His Son. He there says, in the hearing of all to whom the word of this salvation is sent, "Why will ye die?" It is true that by your death He could manifest the dignity of His Godhead; He could make known the power of His wrath; He could spread the awe of His truth and His majesty over the whole territory of His government, and send forth to its uttermost limits the glories of His strength and His immutable sovereignty. But He does not want to magnify Himself over you in this way; He has no ambition whatever after the renown of such a victory, over such weak and insignificant enemies. Their resistance were no trial whatever to His strength or to His greatness. There is nothing in the destruction of creatures so weak that can at all bring Him any distinction, or throw any aggrandizement around Him. And so in Scripture everywhere do we see Him pleading and protesting with you that He does not want to signalize himself upon the ruin of any, but would rather that they should turn and be saved.

And now, my brethren, what remains for you to do? God is willing to save you: are you willing to be saved? The way is set before you most patiently and clearly in the Bible—nay, the very text, brief as it is, points to you the way, as I shall endeavor to explain and set before you in the third head of discourse. But meanwhile, and all the better to secure a hearing from you, let me ask you to lay it upon your consciences, whether you are in a state that will do for you to die in. If not, then I beseech you to think how certainly death will, and how speedily it may, come upon the likeliest of you all. The very youngest among you know very well, that if not cut off previously—which is a very possible thing—then manhood will come, and old age will come, and the dying bed will come, and the very last look you shall ever cast on your acquaintances will come, and the agony of the parting breath will come, and the time when



you are stretched a lifeless corpse before the eyes of weeping relatives will come, and the coffin that is to enclose you will come, and that hour when the company assemble to carry you to the churchyard will come, and that minute when you are put into the grave will come, and the throwing in of the loose earth into the narrow house where you are laid, and the spreading of the green sod over it—all, all will come on every living creature who now hears me; and in a few little years the minister who now speaks, and the people who now listen, will be carried to their long homes, and make room for another generation. Now, all this, you know, must and will happen—your common sense and common experience serve to convince you of it. Perhaps it may have been little thought of in the days of careless and thoughtless and thankless unconcern which you have spent hitherto; but I call upon you to think of it now, to lay it seriously to heart, and no longer to trifle and delay, when the high matters of death and judgment and eternity are thus set so evidently before you. And the tidings wherewith I am charged—and the blood lieth upon your own head and not upon mine, if you will not listen to them—the object of my coming amongst you, is to let you know what more things are to come; it is to carry you beyond the regions of sight and of sense to the regions of faith, and to assure you, in the name of Him who cannot lie, that as sure as the hour of laying the body in the grave comes, so surely will also come the hour of the spirit returning to the God who gave it. Yes, and the day of final reckoning will come, and the appearance of the Son of God in heaven, and His mighty angels around Him, will come, and the opening of the books will come, and the standing of the men of all generations before the judgment-seat will come, and the solemn passing of that sentence which is to fix you for eternity will come. Yes, and if you refuse to be reconciled in the name of Christ, now that He is beseeching you to be so, and if you refuse to

turn from the evil of your ways, and to do and to be what your Saviour would have you, I must tell you what that sentence is to be—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

There is a way of escape from the fury of this tremendous storm. There is a pathway of egress from the state of condemnation to the state of acceptance. There is a method pointed out in Scripture by which we, who by nature are the children of wrath, may come to be at peace with God. Let all ears be open then to our explanation of this way, as we bid you in the language of our text take hold of God's strength, that you may make peace with Him, and which if you do, you shall make peace with Him.

III. Read now the fifth verse:—"Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." Or here is the same with *rather*. Rather than that what is spoken of in the fourth verse should fall upon you—rather than that I should engage in battle with mine enemies—rather than that a result so melancholy to them should take place, as my going through them and burning them together—rather than that all this should happen, I would greatly prefer that they took hold of my strength in order to make peace with me; and I promise, as the sure effect of this proceeding, that they shall make peace with me. We have not far to seek for what is meant by this strength, for Isaiah himself speaks (ch. xxxiii. 6) of the strength of salvation. It is not your destruction but your salvation that God wants to put forth His strength in. There has strength been already put forth in the deliverance of a guilty world—the very strength which He wants you to lay hold of. He will be glorified in the destruction of the sinner, but He would like better to be glorified by his salvation. To destroy you is to do no more than to set fire to briars and thorns, and to consume them; but to save you—this is indeed the power of God and the wisdom of God—this is the mighty

achievement which angels desire to look into—this is the enterprise upon which a mighty Captain embarked all the energy that belonged to Him, and travelled in the greatness of His strength until that He accomplished it; and now that it is accomplished, God would much rather be glorified in the salvation of His saints, than glorified in the destruction of sinners. (2 Thess. i. 7, 10.) God will show His wrath, and make His power known in the destruction of the sinner. But it is a more glorious work of power to redeem that sinner, and this He engages to do for you, if you will take hold of His strength. He would greatly prefer this way of making His power known. He does not want to enter into battle with you, or to consume you like stubble by the breath of His indignation. No; He wants to transform sinners into saints: He wants to transform vessels of wrath into vessels of mercy, and to make known the riches of His glory on those whom He had afore prepared unto glory. There is a strength put forth in the destruction of the sinner, but there is also a strength put forth in the salvation of a sinner, and this is the strength which He wants you to lay hold of in my text—this is the strength by the display of which He would prefer being glorified. He would rather decline entering into a contest with you sinners; for to gain a victory over you would be no more to him than to fight with the briars and the thorns, and to consume them. But from enemies to make friends of you; from the children of wrath to transform you into the children of adoption; from the state of guilt to accomplish such a mighty and a wonderful change upon you, as to put you into the state of justification; from the servants of sin to make you in the day of His power the willing servants of God; to chase away from your faculties the darkness of nature, and to make all light and comfort around you; to turn you from a slave of sense, and to invest with all their rightful ascendancy over your affections the things of eternity; to pull down the strong-

holds of corruption within you, and raise him who was spiritually dead to a life of new obedience;—this is the victory over you which God aspires after. It is not your destruction or your death that He delights in, or that He wants to be glorified by—it is your thorough and complete salvation from the punishment of sin, and the power of sin, on which He is desirous of exalting the glory of His strength, and this is the strength which He calls you to take hold upon.

Let me now, in what remains, first say a few things more upon this strength—the strength of salvation which is spoken of in the text—and then state very briefly what it is to lay hold of it.

And first we read of a mighty strength that had to be put forth in the work of a sinner's justification. You know that all men are sinners, and so all are under the righteous condemnation of God. How, in the name of all that is difficult and wonderful, can these sinners ever get this condemnation removed from them? By what new and unheard of process can the guilty before God ever again become justified in His sight? How from that throne, of which it is said that judgment and justice are the habitation, can the sentence of acquittal ever be heard on the children of iniquity? How can God's honor be kept entire in the sight of angels, if we men who have repeatedly mocked Him and insulted Him, and made our own wish and our own way take the precedence of His high and solemn requirements—if we, with all this contempt of the Lawgiver expressed in our lives, and all this character of rebellion against Him written upon our foreheads, shall be admitted to a place of distinction in heaven—and that too after God has committed Himself in the hearing of angels—after he had given us a law by the disposition of angels, and we had not kept it—and after He had said how the wicked shall not go unpunished, but that cursed is every one who continueth not in all the words of the book of God's law to do them? But what is more, it was

not merely the good and the obedient angels who knew our rebellion—the malignant and fallen angels not only knew it, but they devised and they prompted it. And how, I would ask, can God keep the awful majesty of His truth and justice entire in the sight of His adversaries, if Satan and the angels of wickedness along with him shall have it in their power to say—we prevailed on man to insult Him by sin, and have compelled God to put up with the affront, and to connive at it?

Now, just in proportion to the weight and magnitude of the obstacle was the greatness of that strength which the Saviour put forth in the mighty work of moving it away. We have no adequate conception upon this matter, and must just take our lesson from revelation about it;—and whether we take the prophecies which foretold the work of our Redeemer, or the history which relates it, or the doctrine which expatiates on its worth and its efficacy—all go to establish that there was the operation of a power—that there was the severity of a conflict—that there was the high emprise of an arduous and mighty warfare—that there were all the throes and all the exertions of a struggling, and at length a prevailing energy in the execution of that work which our Saviour had to do—that He had a barrier to surmount, and that, too, with the cries and the pains and the sorrows of heavy suffering and labor—that a mighty obstacle lay before Him, and He, in the business of removing it, had to travel in all the greatness of the faculties which belonged to Him—that there was a burden laid upon His shoulders, which by no one else but the Prince of Peace could have been borne—that there was a task put into His hand which none but He could fulfil. And had the question ever been reasoned throughout the hosts of paradise, Who can so bend the unchangeable attributes of God, who can give them a shift so wonderful, that the sinners who have insulted Him may be taken into forgiveness, and His honor be kept untainted and

entire?—there is not one of the mighty throng who would not have shrunk from an enterprise so lofty. There is not one of them who could at once magnify the law and release man from its violated sanctions. There is not one of them who could turn its threatening away from us, and at the same time give to the truth and the justice of God their brightest manifestation. There is not one of them who could unravel the mystery of our redemption through all the difficulties which beset and which surround it. There is not one of them who, by the strength of his arm, could have obtained the conquest over these difficulties. And however little we may enter into the elements of this weighty speculation, let us forget not that the question was not merely between God and man—it was between God and all the creatures He had formed. They saw the dilemma; they felt how deeply it involved the character of the Deity; they perceived its every bearing on the majesty of His attributes, and on the stability of the government that was upheld by Him. With them it was a matter of deep and most substantial interest; and when the Eternal Son stepped forward to carry the undertaking to its end, the feeling amongst them all was that a battle behoved to be fought, and that the strength of this mighty Captain of our salvation was alone equal to the achievement of the victory.

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and

there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

A way of redemption has been found out in the unsearchable riches of divine wisdom, and Christ is called the wisdom of God. But the same Christ is also called the power of God. In the mighty work of redemption He put forth a strength, and it is that strength that we are called to take hold upon. There was a wonderful strength in bearing the wrath which would have fallen on the millions and millions more of a guilty world. There was a strength which bore Him up under the agonies of the garden. There was a strength which supported Him under the hidings of His Father's countenance. There was a strength which upheld Him in the dark hour of the travail of His soul, and which one might think had well-nigh given way when He called out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" There was a strength which carried Him in triumph through the contest over Satan, when he buffeted Him with his temptations; and a strength far greater than we know of in that mysterious struggle which He held with the powers of darkness, when Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and the Captain of our salvation spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, and triumphed over them. There was a strength in overcoming all the mighty difficulties which lay in the way between the sinner and God, in unbarring the gates of acceptance to a guilty world, in bringing truth and mercy to meet, and righteousness and peace to enter into fellowship—so that God might be just, while He is the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

So much for the strength which is put forth in the work of man's redemption. But there is also a strength put forth in the work of man's regeneration. Christ hath not only done a great work for us in making good our reconciliation with God—He further does a great work in us when He

makes us like unto God. But I have not time to dwell upon this last topic, and must content myself with referring you to the following Scriptures—Eph. i. 19; ii. 10; Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10; John xv. 5. The power which raised Jesus from the dead is the power which raises us from our death in trespasses and sins. The power that was put forth on creation is the power that makes us new creatures in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Neither have I time to make out a full demonstration of what is meant by laying hold of that strength. When you apply to a friend for some service, some relief from distress or difficulty, you may be said to lay hold of him; and when you place firm reliance both on his ability and willingness to do you the service, you may well say that your hold is upon your friend—an expression which becomes all the more appropriate should he promise to do the needful good office, in which case your hold is not upon his power only, but upon his faithfulness. And it is even so with the promises of God in Christ Jesus—you have both a power and a promise to take hold of. If you believe that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him, and if you believe the honesty of His invitation to all who are weary and heavy-laden, that they might come unto Him and have rest unto their souls, thus judging Him to be faithful who has promised, then indeed will you lay hold of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, and according to the faith which has thus led you to fix upon the Saviour so will it be done unto you. To continue in this faith is in the language of Scripture to hold fast your confidence and the rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end. Cast not away this confidence which hath great recompense of reward; or if you have not yet begun to place this confidence in the assurances of the gospel, lay hold of them now—they are addressed to each and to all of you. It is not a vague



generality of which I am speaking. Let every man amongst you take up with Christ, and trust in Him for yourself.

I am well aware that unless the Spirit reveal to you, all I have said about Him will fall fruitless upon your ears, and your hearts will remain as cold and as heavy and as alienated as ever. Faith is His gift, and it is not of ourselves. But the minister is at his post when he puts the truth before you; and you are at your posts when you hearken diligently, and have a prayerful spirit of dependence on the Giver of all wisdom—that He will bless the word spoken, and make it reach your souls in the form of a salutary and convincing application. And it is indeed wonderful—it is passing wonderful, that there should be about us such an ungenerous suspicion of our Father who is in heaven. It cannot be sufficiently wondered at that all the ways in which He sets Himself forth to us should have so feeble an influence in the way of cheering us on to a more delighted confidence. How shall we account for it—that the barrier of unbelief should stand so obstinately firm in spite of every attempt and every remonstrance—that the straitening should still continue—not the straitening of God towards us, for He has said everything to woo us to put our trust in Him—but the straitening of us towards God, whereby in the face of His every kind and exhilarating declaration we persist in being cold and distant and afraid of Him?

I know not, my brethren, in how far I may have succeeded, as an humble and unworthy instrument, in drawing aside the veil which darkens the face of Him who sitteth on the throne. But oh, how imposing is the attitude, and how altogether affecting is the argument with which He comes forward to us in the text of this day! It is not so much His saying that there is no fury in Him—this He often tells us in other passages of Scripture; but the striking peculiarity of the words now submitted to us is the way in which

He would convince us how little interest He can have in our destruction, and how far it is from His thoughts to aspire after the glory of such an achievement, as if He had said—it would be nothing to me to consume you all by the breath of my indignation—it would throw no illustration over me to sweep away the whole strength of that rebellion which you have mustered up against me—it would make no more to my glory than if I went through the thorns and briers and burned them before me. This is not the battle I want to engage in—this is not the victory by which I seek to signalize myself; and you mistake me—you mistake me, ye feeble children of men, if you think that I aspire after anything else with any one of you than that you should be prevailed on to come into my vineyard, and lay hold of my strength, and seek to make peace with me, and you shall make peace with me. The victory that my heart is set upon is not a victory over your persons—that is a victory that will easily be gotten in the great day of final reckoning over all who have refused my overtures, and would none of my reproof, and have turned them away from my beseeching offers of reconciliation. In that great day of the power of mine anger it will be seen how easy it is to accomplish such a victory as this—how rapidly the fire of my conflagration will involve the rebels who have opposed me in that devouring flame from which they never, never can be extricated—how speedily the execution of the condemning sentence will run through the multitude who stand at the left hand of the Avenging Judge; and rest assured, ye men who are now hearing me, and whom I freely invite all to enter into the vineyard of God, that this is not the triumph that God is longing after. It is not a victory over your persons then of which He is at all ambitious—it is a victory over your wills now—it is that you do honor to His testimony by placing your reliance on it—it is that you accept of His kind and free assurances that He has no ill-will to you—it is that you cast

the whole burden of sullen fear and suspicion away from your hearts, and that now, even now, you enter into a fellowship of peace with the God whom you have offended. Oh! be prevailed upon. I know that terror will not subdue you; I know that all the threatenings of the law will not reclaim you; I know that no direct process of pressing home the claims of God upon your obedience will ever compel you to the only obedience that is of any value in His estimation—even the willing obedience of the affections to a father whom you love. But surely when He puts on in your sight the countenance of a Father—when He speaks to you with the tenderness of a Father—when He tries to woo you back to that house of His from which you have wandered, and, to persuade you of His good-will, descends so far as to reason the matter, and to tell you that He is no more seeking any glory from your destruction than He would seek glory from lighting into a blaze the thorns and the briers, and burning them together—ah! my brethren, should it not look plain to the eye of faith how honest and sincere the God of your redemption is, who is thus bowing Himself down to the mention of such an argument! Do lay hold of it, and be impressed by it, and cherish no longer any doubt of the good-will of the Lord God, merciful and gracious; and let your faith work by love to Him who hath done so much and said so much to engage it, and let this love evince all the power of a commanding principle within you, by urging your every footstep to the new obedience of new creatures in Jesus Christ your Lord.

Thus the twofold benefit of the gospel will be realized by all who believe and obey that gospel. Reconciled to God by the death of His Son, regenerated by the power of that mighty and all-subduing Spirit who is at the giving of the Son, your salvation will be complete—washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

## XXXII.

### THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH.

PRESSENSÉ.

[The "Union of Evangelical Churches of France" embraces a membership of merely a few thousand souls; but it is a live Christian organization. Hitherto merely tolerated by the Roman Catholic government, it has done much in support of pure Gospel truth. EDMOND DE PRESSENSÉ, D.D., Pastor of the French Evangelical Church, Paris, is worthy to be its representative, by right of intellectual gifts, scholarship, and eloquence. By his writings, he has powerfully combated the sceptical works of Renan and Strauss. Among those translated are: "Jesus Christ; His Times, Life, and Work;" "The Redeemer;" "Religion and the Reign of Terror, or the Church during the French Revolution;" "The Religions before Christ," an introduction to the history of the first three centuries of the Church. Dr. Pressensé hesitates not to preach the truth in all bluntness to his susceptible countrymen, saying: "What is especially diseased and enfeebled in France is the conscience—the essential thing, the basis of all righteousness, of all real greatness."]

*"Take heed, therefore, how ye hear."*—Luke viii. 18.

THE Church teaches and is taught in turn; every Christian contributes to this mutual teaching, and has a share in it. Appointed guardian of the truth, he must take care of the sacred deposit, defend his Church against the invasion of error, and preserve the pure Gospel in a faithful heart. He teaches as often as he gives his evidence; he teaches by every pious word he utters, and by every exertion he makes to win a soul for Jesus Christ. But precisely because he teaches, he needs teaching; his religious knowledge is always narrow and insufficient, and should he have acquired all human knowledge, it is as nothing compared to what he would still have to learn. Then this holy knowledge is of such a

nature, that it must be increased every day in order not to diminish. It is forgotten with a frightful rapidity; it is altered not less quickly. Many causes, which it is not necessary to enumerate, tend to deprive us of it, if we do not continually reconquer it by persevering labor. Hence the importance to the Church herself of this teaching under its divers forms, the mightiest of which, because the most popular, is preaching. We need not state what it must be; we know that it is only efficacious, in so far as it is the living echo of the Holy Scripture. We wish to-day to speak particularly to those who listen, not to those who speak. To say the truth, we all listen by turns; and those who are intrusted with the formidable task of teaching ought more than others to feel the necessity to be taught, and to receive abundantly in order to give forth abundantly. The Church not only addresses herself to her proper members, but also to that crowd of hearers who do not yet belong to her, but whom divers motives bring to her worship. Her teaching is designed for them as well as for Christians, and though it takes various shapes, according to the different classes of men to whom it is offered, it remains essentially the same, and the same dispositions are necessary to be benefited by it. We must show the same activity to learn anew the truth, as to learn it the first time. We shall, therefore, make no distinction between the hearers of the Gospel; what we say to some will be applicable to others, and it will be easy for every one to lay hold of it with the particular application which suits him. We shall repeat to all that serious word of Jesus Christ: "TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR!"

When He spoke thus, He was in the first period of His ministry. Multitudes were thronging around Him, filled with admiration for His person, following Him from place to place, and forming for Him a triumphal retinue. Do not imagine that they were only spurred by low and interested motives. If a certain number of Jews, with a carnal spirit,

clave momentarily to Jesus, because they hoped to receive from Him material goods, and, above all things, bodily food; and if some others were moved by an eager curiosity, to be witnesses of some astonishing miracle, yet many were won to the Saviour by His gentleness and tender charity. They liked His word as much as His miracles; it exercised on them a secret but powerful charm, which softened and subjugated them, and they exclaimed, after having heard some of His similitudes, in which He represented the greatest truths under simple and lively images, "*He does not teach as the Scribes and Pharisees.*" A magnificent harvest seemed ripening in those furrows scarcely sown; but the keen eye of the Sower discerned a real barrenness under a bright appearance. He knew how many germs would be choked under the stones or by the weeds, how many would be carried away by the wind of the world; and He knew how few the ears which would reach full maturity. To what are we to attribute such a poor result? What was wanting? It was not diligent culture, for the Saviour had taken that upon Himself; nor was the sun or the dew wanting; *the favorable soil was wanting.* It is not with the human soul as with the ploughed earth; she is not fertilized passively and against her will. Receiving is for her to be active and willing; conviction is a hard labor. Therefore, so long as she has only stopped at an easy emotion, at fluctuating impressions, she has not truly opened herself to the seed of eternal life; it is strewn on the wayside to rise only for a day. Therefore the divine Master thus solemnly warns the multitudes thronging around Him, "TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR." To hear, is not only to be seated at the feet of Christ, and to feel the charm of His teaching: it is an act of our will. It is not sufficient to acknowledge that He does not teach as the Scribes and Pharisees. Be not deceived; His teaching, which has more sweetness and more charms, requires much more exertion of His hearers than any other. Nothing is easier than to bend

our idle spirit under the yoke of the synagogu, and to receive passively a prescribed doctrine. It costs more to enter into the school of freedom than into that of authority; and the gracious Master who requires personal belief, is, indeed, much more exacting than those hard and haughty masters who only require blind submission. "TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR."

How much does not modern Christendom require to hear the same warning! Many centuries have passed since the professing Christian nations received the teaching of the Gospel, and yet they live in a shameful ignorance. If we interrogated the majority of those who bear Christ's name, we should be confounded to see how little they are acquainted with His doctrine. They know less of Him than the pagans of yesterday. We are still in the presence of a great multitude sitting in darkness. And if we turn towards you, my dear hearers, you who have been nourished with the milk of the Word from your earliest infancy, you who have so often surrounded the pulpit of truth; and if we ask you for the result of so many lectures on the divine Word, and of so many sermons, will not the greater part of you be obliged to acknowledge that there is no proportion between the results and your privileges? It appears as if the sword of the Spirit had become blunt. To what a degree of excellence should we not all have reached had we answered to all the appeals which have been addressed to us; to what a measure of faith, charity, and holiness should we have not attained? Let us impute to ourselves alone this barrenness. We have heard much, but we have not hearkened, not heard with attention. We have imagined that the teaching of the Church possessed a particular power which excused us from making any energetical attempts, and that the holy accents had a magical influence even on an inactive soul, like the sacramental elements, according to the Roman Catholic dogma! What a strange subversion of every sound idea!

Preaching can only have a strictly moral effect; it communicates to us thoughts and feelings, and therefore appeals to the thought and to the feeling. It provokes decisions and therefore stimulates the will. It is accordingly the most moral means of grace, that which necessitates most the effective participation of our freedom. "TAKE HEED, THEREFORE, HOW YE HEAR." To give more weight to that exhortation, let us consider who is He who speaks to us; what He tells us; the kind of attention which the truth revealed by Him requires; and, lastly, what it costs to despise it.

Who speaks to you in the teaching which you seek at the foot of the pulpit of truth? Do you not know that it is God himself? He speaks to you first by the Holy Book, which is the basis of all faithful preaching. You hear His prophets and His apostles, those great witnesses, those incomparable preachers, who were authorized to say: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon us." You have heard the sublime songs of the harp of Sion. The psalmist has celebrated for you the greatness and the compassion of his God, who is yours, and has stirred you up to adoration and filial confidence. Isaiah has carried you up, as it were, to the foot of Jehovah's throne, and in his prophetic flight has conducted you, also, in some measure, to the cross where the Man of Sorrows accomplished the great sacrifice. Simple and sublime narrations, bringing to sight, with an astonishing profoundness, on the one side, the secret recesses of the human soul, degraded by the fall; and, on the other, the admirable ways by which God reclaims her, and brings her back to Himself; appeals to repentance, sometimes filled with an alarming seriousness, and sometimes pervaded by an infinite tenderness: here the thunder roaring on an overcast sky, there the aurora of the day of salvation gilding the heights lately crowned with lightnings. All those revelations of the Old Testament, stamped by the great hope of the Messiah, from the first page to the last, have been



read over and over to you; all those rays which shone successively for the Jews, have been brought back for you to the same focus. God has not left you on the threshold of the temple, in the majestical porch of the ancient covenant. He has given you the Gospel, with all its details of definite revelations. For you John the Baptist brings from the wilderness his austere preaching of repentance, and the way beaten by him in the desert has led before your eyes to the manger and the cross. For you the evangelists have painted the celestial, and yet so really human, figure of the Redeemer; to you the apostles have proclaimed Him, as they proclaimed Him to the multitudes converted by them. You have heard those first addresses of St. Peter which gathered to the Church thousands of adherers. St. Paul has enabled you to lay hold of the most sublime sides of Christian doctrine; he has developed for you, with that keen logic and ardent feeling which characterize him, the fundamental points of the Gospel. St. John has given you a glimpse of those greatest depths of divine love, which unclose themselves to the eye like the unbounded azure of the sky, in that simple, hearty, mystical language of which he alone possesses the secret. And lastly, you have heard Him himself, the divine Master, whose every word is creative, who rouses our hidden energies, who humbles us without casting us down, who throws us into the dust, but without driving us to despair; whose word causes moisture and strength to flow in us, restoring the lame, healing the blind, raising the dead. You have heard Him as if you had been His contemporaries, as if you had been sitting at the foot of the mountain with the crowd who received the charter of His kingdom, or on the edge of Jacob's well with the Samaritan woman, or in the temple in the presence of the unmasked and thunder-struck Pharisees, or in the upper room in which He opens to His disciples His whole heart. Hearers of the prophets and the apostles,

hearers of Jesus Christ, can you deny that God has spoken to you?

We are not worthy to unloose the shoe-latchet of the last of the primitive witnesses; and yet, my brethren, we believe that God also speaks to you by our preaching, in the measure in which it is approved by Him. The treasury of grace is deposited in the earthen vessel; what does it signify that the container is weak and frail, if the contents are of infinite value? Revelation must become real and present, passing through the impressions, the aspirations, the experiences, the secret sorrows of the human heart at every period. Like the Christians of the day of Pentecost, we "speak in our own tongue the wonderful works of God," in the tongue of our individuality and of our age. Certainly, our word must not be blindly received—it must be brought to the test of the infallible Word of God: for the pure gold of truth which we bring you by preaching is too often alloyed through human frailty. Yet, notwithstanding this, which we deplore, we believe that God condescends to speak through our unworthy mouths and to take us for His instruments also. Why, my brethren, do you so seldom perceive this? It is, in the first place, the fault of your preachers, who, too often being infatuated with themselves, interposing their personalities between you and the truth, care more for the fame of their name than for the triumph of Jesus Christ. But have we no just reproach to make to you? Are you not constantly spreading under their feet that fatal net of vainglory? Are you not much more preoccupied with the human side than with the divine side in the ministry? In acting thus, you do not wrong yourselves less than the witness of truth: in the presence of man you keep the attitude of a judge who bestows blame or approbation; in the presence of God you ought to humble yourselves and to submit. Man leaves you erect; God would cast you into the dust at His feet. It is easier for the natural heart to admire than to obey, to bestow crowns on eloquence than to

receive a cross to carry from the hands of Jesus Christ. The Church thus tends to become a kind of academy, where more is spoken of talent and reputation than of conversion and holiness. She obtains what she wants—academical discourses which try to flatter a refined taste, which aim at the intellect and not at the heart, and which reach neither the one nor the other : for he who *seeks* eloquence finds it not, just as he who seeks his life loses it ; and you who have encouraged them, you leave the temple with a soul more empty than when you entered it. Therefore leave man alone, and only seek God. What need is there to hear man speaking as man ? What good will he do you ? Of what use will it be to you to add weakness to weakness, misery to misery ? You must hear God. Gather eagerly the few crumbs of heavenly bread which preaching affords you, and forget everything else. If you sit down at the foot of our pulpits in such a disposition, you will soon recognise that God wants to speak to you by us.

But there is in our midst an all-powerful preacher. No one sees Him with bodily eyes—no one hears Him with bodily ears—and yet He speaks ; and when He does not speak, all is ineffectual, all is dead in our worship. You guess whom I mean—it is the Holy Spirit. If His flame has not purified our lips, they only pronounce barren words which the wind carries away ; if He does not open your heart as that of Lydia, you remain cold and indifferent : there is no longer any communication between God and you. Without Him, the book which He has inspired is only a dumb book : He alone gives it life. But when He breathes upon those sacred pages, it is like a resurrection of the great biblical past. The divine words, pronounced centuries ago, sound again with the same power. We have no longer only the memorial of the evangelical history, it unrolls itself under our eyes ; it resembles a river, the ice of which had fettered the waters, but under the sun's warm breath it begins again to flow. How the

soul vibrates under that working of the Spirit! God speaks as really to her as if He shook heaven and earth. She does not always answer, but she well knows that He has spoken.

Take heed, therefore, how ye hear. He who demands an audience of you is not a man, were he the greatest or the most illustrious. He is the King of Heaven—He who has created you and will judge you. When He condescends to address you, one cannot say to Him as one would say to one's equal, "When I have a convenient season I will call for thee." One cannot turn away with indifference when he asks our heart. He is not mocked with impunity:

"God reveals His presence,  
Let us now adore Him,  
And with awe appear before Him:  
He speaks in His temple,  
All in us keep silence,  
And before Him bow with reverence:  
Him alone—God we own;  
He is our Lord and Saviour:  
Praise His name for ever."

It is God who speaks to you; but what does He tell you? That which is of the utmost consequence to you—that which is necessary for time and for eternity. It is here not the question of a truth which offers an attraction to the spirit, which adds a new notion to those which we are already possessing. No; the point in question is the central truth which sways all others, that from which they borrow their value, as the planets borrow their light from the luminous globe around which they gravitate. God does not speak to amuse our intellect, or to send to our hearts a sweet and figurative emotion. He wants to restore us to the truth in every respect. He reveals us to ourselves by rooting out every illusion of our mind. He shows us our soul quite naked; He lightens her deep darkness; He denounces to us without reserve our corruption and our per-

dition; He causes us to discover in the inward recesses of our being, in our perverted will, the principle of evil: and thus is solved the most formidable question which has ever tormented mankind. But He has also to tell us how He raises us up again—by what means He causes us to reascend to Him from the abyss of our degradation. He shows us, in the narrow path which proceeds from the cross, the way of returning to God and to be restored to our own. He reveals to us, with a perfect clearness, His design to restore all things in Jesus Christ, and to reconcile them by the blood of His cross. He teaches us how, by His Spirit, we may possess again the Divine image, now disfigured in us by sin, and become sharers of His holiness. What He has to tell us may therefore be reduced to that declaration, "Thou art lost, but I have forgiven thee; come to Me, and I will save thee." Is there a subject of preoccupation equal to that? What are the things which we call important compared with that only needful thing? What value have the problems which we start, in the face of that problem of life and death, or, rather, of eternity? The religious truth is, definitively, the hidden pole on which everything depends here below, unless we see in the world and in history a mere plaything of chance, and not the realization of a divine thought. To possess it, is to be placed in the centre of everything; is to have the possibility of understanding, of laying hold of everything; it is to see harmony follow chaos; but it is, above all things, to get out ourselves from disorder and find peace again, and, instead of advancing with a bandage on the eyes and despair in the heart, towards an unknown world, the desolate region of perdition, it is fixing our eyes on the cross, and walking with a firm step towards the realization of the most certain hopes. How should we, in the presence of such a truth, not borrow from St. Paul the familiar energy of his language, and repeat with him: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge

of Christ Jesus my Lord—for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” How serious, important, and indispensable, therefore, is the Word which God directs to us! In the midst of all those diverse ways which cross one another in this great crossway of human opinions, a voice is heard—the voice of God—to tell us, “This is the way of salvation.” We have only a few days to hear it. Oh! “TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR.”

The same recommendation follows from the nature of the teaching which the Church offers to us—it demands serious attention. Shut up, as we are commonly, in the circle of visible things, it is difficult for us to lift our minds to the contemplation of invisible things. Our thoughts have been too much accustomed to creep; their heavy wings do no longer carry them, by a sudden flight, towards the celestial heights. Our preoccupations are for the world; this is the real disposition of our spirit—it has a great inclination for it. If we do not energetically react against that natural tendency, we shall be hurried by the stream of vanity far from truth. We all wear the chain of vulgar interests, of trifling cares. If we do not break it, we shall remain the sad prisoners of the world, at the very hour when the voice from heaven rings in our ears. The most stirring appeals will be covered by the tumult of our worldly thoughts—more culpable than those in the parable, who refused to answer the invitation of a generous king, under pretence of their affairs or their pleasures. In reality—that is to say, in the spirit—one has remained in his fields, where he calculates the value of the next harvest; another is in his counting-house, reckoning his money; a third calls to his mind the success of his literary labors; and that elegant lady figures to herself the festivity where she hopes to shine; and he who is going to marry her only thinks of her. How many wandering minds in the great assemblies united in our temples! If we should hear

vibrating in distinct words all the confused thoughts of those who attend, what a buzzing of vanity, what an uproar of eager desires ! It will be thus, my brethren, as long as you do not struggle against yourselves. Attention is the prize of continued exertion—it supposes a firm resolution to remove every frivolous distraction. We must be watchful every moment to drive away those flocks of birds always ready to pick up the seed of eternal life as it falls on the soil. We must curb those erring thoughts which drag us along through the world—shake off the torpor into which an idle fancy plunges us, and consecrate our whole being in calm attention.

Yet attention is not sufficient, Christian truth claims a particular attention. It is not enough to bring great sagacity, a penetrating spirit, trained to study and fully determined to learn the truths which are presented. If it were only the question of a purely human knowledge, we should not require more. Such a person will easily succeed in earthly sciences, he will speedily make himself familiar with the most complicated languages, he will be a great mathematician, an eminent scholar ; he will, as one has cleverly said, make the tour of the planet, and return laden with a treasure of learning which will secure to him the most envied glory. But the region beyond that, the country of the soul, the sublime sphere of religious truth, will not open to him on that account ; no, not even when borne on the wings of genius. This man whose thought is so cultivated and so deep in a limited circle, is lost in darkness as soon as he oversteps it ; he is a blind man, the unhappiest of all the blind, because he fancies he can see everything, and boldly advances towards the unknown. Religious truth has organs of its own, and by which it reveals itself to man. It addresses itself above all things to his heart and his conscience. There, in our moral being, is the inward eye, able to perceive the heavenly light ; there is the sense of the divine. Neither the understanding, nor the imagina-

tion, nor the reason, abandoned to itself, will ever receive a ray of it, because it may happen that we deny God and the invisible world, while we possess these faculties in a superior degree. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear. If your heart is not well prepared, if your conscience is not upright, you will certainly have heard sounds ringing in your ears; but those sounds, which bring to others an unspeakable joy, will for you be lost in the air where they vibrated. Lo! there is close to you a man with an uncultivated appearance, perhaps one of the despised of the earth. See how his eyes sparkle, what a holy emotion animates all his features on hearing those same words which leave you cold and indifferent! He eagerly gathers each word, as the thirsty man drinks the water of the well found at last in the burning sand. He weeps, he worships, he would like to prostrate himself before God, for he will go down to his house justified. That man is not like you; he has eyes to see, and ears to hear; he has not shut up his heart, he has not stifled his conscience. When, escaping one day from the pride which possesses you, and obeying that secret impulse which drives you towards God; ceasing to stifle your best aspirations, you will come into this temple with a broken heart and an attentive conscience, you too will see and you will hear. It will seem to you as if you awoke from a bad dream, which had veiled and darkened everything. A wonderful world of beauty will appear to you where you have only seen vain illusions; you will recognise your God in the Galilean, and you will know that from a despised country the salvation of mankind has come.

The truth in which you have been instructed in the Christian Church is a holy law, and, at the same time, an august dogma. It aims at life, at reality, at practice; in this province conviction is called conversion; to believe is not simply to adhere in the spirit to a system, it is to change the way, it is to choose a new path, it is to give ourselves to Jesus Christ.



The part of the will is therefore considerable in the formation of our belief. We are incessantly provoked, by the preaching of the Gospel, to make a vigorous use of it. If we are not yet the true disciples of Christ, we are urged to side with Him, to get out of our hesitation and to be decided; the teaching of the Church places before our eyes life and death, it solicits from us a determination which allows no delay. If we have already accepted in principle the ground of Christian life, new consequences of the law of holiness will be each day proposed to us; numberless duties will be presented, and we shall have thus a new path to take whenever we hear the divine Word. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear. If you hear the teaching of the Church only as one hears a dissertation, or a discourse full of gentleness which touches the heart, but which leaves only a few emotions behind, the morning hoar-frost will not pass away more quickly than those superficial impressions. He who is satisfied to hear the divine Word without practising it, is, according to St. James, a forgetful hearer. He only remembers it who tries to accomplish the divine will, and who, from the always vague and movable impression, passes to positive acts. Besides, nothing is more sad, nothing, I should say, is more demoralizing, than to understand our duties and not perform them. The light which illuminates without warming rises from that pale and frozen sun of the abode of condemnation, the inhabitants of which believe what they curse; the devils know what is good, while they reject it. To know the best and to do the worst is the perversion of perversions. Let us take heed lest we approach it imperceptibly, by accustoming ourselves to the view of the Christian ideal image, while we resign ourselves to the flat reality of a miserable life. Let us to each progress in knowledge add progress in holiness—an effort, at least, a firmer determination better to serve God. Let us seek in each exhortation that which concerns us personally, let us stop in its flight the arrow which is designed for us, let us introduce into our life the

reforms which we feel to be necessary. Let us not take Christianity as Pharisees or as artists ; let us take it seriously, as the rule of our life, a rule not only for the great days, but for the most ordinary course of existence. Let us always bear in mind that we are standing on the boundaries of eternity, and that only to-day belongs to us. How is it that we so much despise invisible and eternal things ? What are the interests which are debated in the forum or in parliament, compared with the interests of the immortal soul ? It is truly inconceivable that discourses on the future life leave us so tranquil, as if our fate did not depend on their issue.

These reflections, my brethren, lead us to a last consideration, which will give to our text a frightful solemnity. TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR, thinking of what it costs to despise the truth. The Word of God does not return to Him without effect ; it comes back to Him after having saved or ruined us. It is not possible for it to resemble ours, which so often is lost in void space ; it does not fall to the ground, or, if it falls, it is either like the dew which fertilizes the soil or the lightning which consumes it. After having heard it, we are no longer in the position in which we were before it was proclaimed to us. If we have received it with submission, it has opened to us that door of heaven which no one can shut, it has freed us from condemnation. But if we have rejected it, it has fastened upon us the burden of a new and more terrible condemnation, for it increases our responsibility. Before you had heard it one could believe that there was more ignorance than conscious rebellion in your estrangement from God ; one could think that if you knew Him you would be eager to love and to serve Him. Such an excuse is no longer possible from the day you have been instructed in the truth. You know now what you reject ; it is with a full knowledge that you reject a God who has clearly manifested himself to you. You add to your old sins a new sin, which

crowns them all, which stamps them with a fixed decision, and which renders them, on that account, incurable. It is with full consciousness that you turn aside from a God who has drawn near to you. Therefore, after this momentary contact with the truth, you are more perverted and more hardened; your culpability has increased in proportion to the facilities which had been afforded to you, and on your impenitent soul falls, with all its weight, that severe word: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" It would have been better that the name of Jesus Christ had never been pronounced in our ears, rather than, having learned it from our childhood, never to have given Him our hearts. It would have been better to have been born on some far-off shore, where redeeming truth has not yet penetrated, rather than, having grown up in the shade of the sanctuary, to have been lulled into formalism. It would have been better to have inhabited a Sodom rather than a Capernaum or a Jerusalem, and have received with indifference the message of salvation. A frightful condition that which compels us to consider the offered grace as our greatest misfortune in consequence of its abuse, and which causes us to lose ourselves irreparably with what was designed to save us.

When the divine child of Mary was presented to Simeon, the old saint declared that He "would be set for the fall and rising again of many," and the apostle St. Paul developed the same thought by saying that the Gospel "is either the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death." The religious history of mankind is a long commentary on these words. The most dreadful thing is the national fall of the chosen people, and these eighteen centuries Jesus Christ has been a savour of death unto death to the unconverted Jews. In the midst of our modern Christendom, wherever evangelical light has shone on inert or frivolous souls, it has left behind it a moral decline which was almost irremediable.

Certainly the unhappiest man to-day, the most hardened, is he who has been blessed most, enlightened most, and who has not truly given himself to God. It is some Demas, who has heard the pure Gospel, who has preached it perhaps, but who has not been truly converted himself. Woe to that man! it would have been good for him if he had never been born! On the other hand, what an admirable raising up of formerly degraded souls, what a transformation, what a resurrection! Jesus Christ has been to them a saviour of life. There is a person, who, a few days ago, was an ignorant man, with a coarse spirit, who could not understand his Master, nor follow Him in the day of danger, and who denied Him three times in the court of the high priest. To-day it is the apostle St. Peter, confounding the Sanhedrim by his courage, resisting threats and ill-treatment; and as much by his humility, as by his immovable firmness. Yesterday he was the thunderer's son, full of violence in his indignation; to-day he is the apostle of charity. Yesterday we saw Saul, the persecutor; to-day we see St. Paul. And if you trace these falls and these risings again back to their first cause, you will find, on the one side the rejected word, and on the other the received and accepted word; therefore, TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR.

TAKE HEED, my brethren, we have discharged our duty; we have proclaimed before you the truth; what can we do more? We cannot substitute ourselves for you: the exercise of your will is the most personal act which can be accomplished. It depends on your determination to make of the hour you have passed in this temple the subject of an incurable regret, or of an eternal thanksgiving. Take your resolution; make haste, the time is short; truth wears rapidly out for him who refuses to open his spirit to it. Do not lose the few days which God is still granting to you; and remember that the only bread which nourishes is that which we eat in the sweat of our brow.

TAKE HEED, THEREFORE, HOW YE HEAR. Amen.

### XXXIII.

#### THE TRANSFIGURATION.

KINGSLEY.

[CHARLES KINGSLEY, D.D., professor of modern history at Cambridge, chaplain in ordinary to the Queen, and Dean of Rochester, was born at Holne Vicarage, Devonshire, June 12th 1819. He gained honors at Magdalen College, Cambridge, and became rector of Eversley, Hampshire, about 1844. His writings are various and able—Village, and National, Sermons, novels, and poems. "Hypatia, or, New Foes with Old Faces," vividly outlines the struggles of Christianity at Alexandria with the neo-platonic philosophers of Greece, and the paganism of the barbarous Goths. It is designed to show that the sophisms of spiritualists are mere re-vampings of worn-out theories. Dean Kingsley has labored faithfully to better the condition of the English working classes, and has aided in the formation of co-operative associations. The following is taken from "Village Sermons," characterized as "downright, honest wisdom, conveyed in a plain and simple style."]

*"Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them."*—Mark ix. 2.

THE second lesson for this morning service brings us to one of the most wonderful passages in our blessed Saviour's whole stay on earth, namely, His transfiguration. The story, as told by the different Evangelists, is this,—That our Lord took Peter, and John, and James his brother, and led them up into a high mountain apart, which mountain may be seen to this very day. It is a high peaked hill, standing apart from all the hills around it, with a small smooth space of ground upon the top, very fit, from its height and its loneliness, for a transaction like the transfiguration, which our Lord wished no one but these three to behold. There the apostles fell asleep; while our blessed Lord, who had deeper thoughts in His heart than they had, knelt down and

prayed to *His* Father and *our* Father, which is in heaven. And as he prayed, the form of His countenance was changed, and His raiment became shining, white as the light; and there appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Him. They talked of matters which the angels desire to look into, of the greatest matters that ever happened in this earth since it was made; of the redemption of the world, and of the death which Christ was to undergo at Jerusalem. And as they were talking, the apostles awoke, and found into what glorious company they had fallen while they slept. What they felt no mortal man can tell—that moment was worth to them all the years they had lived before. When they had gone up with Jesus into the mount, He was but the poor carpenter's son, wonderful enough to *them*, no doubt, with His wise, searching words, and His gentle, loving looks, that drew to Him all men who had hearts left in them, and wonderful enough, too, from all the mighty miracles which they had seen Him do; but still he was merely a man like themselves, poor, and young, and homeless, who felt the heat, and the cold, and the rough roads as much as they did. They could feel that he spake as never man spake—they could see that God's Spirit and power was on Him as it had never been on any man in their time. God had even enlightened their reason by His Spirit, to know that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God. But still it does seem they did not fully understand who and what He was; they could not understand how the Son of God should come in the form of a despised and humble man; they did not understand that His glory was to be a spiritual glory. They expected His kingdom to be a kingdom of this world—they expected His glory to consist in palaces, and armies, and riches, and jewels, and all the magnificence with which Solomon and the old Jewish kings were adorned; they thought that he was to conquer back again from the Roman emperor all the inestimable treasures of which the Romans had robbed the

Jews, and that He was to make the Jewish nation, like the Roman, the conquerors and masters of all the nations of the earth. So that it was a puzzling thing to their minds why he should be King of the Jews at the very time that he was but a poor tradesman's son, living on charity. It was to show them that His kingdom was the kingdom of heaven that He was transfigured before them.

They saw His glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The form of His countenance was changed; all the majesty, and courage, and wisdom, and love, and resignation, and pity, that lay in His noble heart, shone out through His face, while He spoke of His death which he should accomplish at Jerusalem—the Holy Ghost that was upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom, and love, and beauty—the Spirit which produces everything that is lovely in heaven and earth, in soul and body, blazed out through His eyes, and all His glorious countenance, and made Him look like what He was—a God. My friends, what a sight! Would it not be worth while to journey thousands of miles—to go through all difficulties, dangers, that man ever heard of, for one sight of that glorious face, that we might fall down upon our knees before it, and, if it were but for a moment, give way to the delight of finding something that we could utterly love and utterly adore? I say, the delight of finding something to worship; for if there is a noble, if there is a holy, if there is a spiritual feeling in man, it is the feeling which bows him down before those who are greater, and wiser, and holier than himself. I say, that feeling of respect for what is noble is a heavenly feeling. The man who has lost it—the man who feels no respect for those who are above him in age, above him in knowledge, above him in wisdom, above him in goodness,—*that* man shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is only the man who is like a little child, and feels the delight of having some one to look up to, who will ever feel delight in looking

up to Jesús Christ, who is the Lord of lords and King of kings. It was the want of respect, it was the dislike of feeling any one superior to himself, which made the devil rebel against God, and fall from heaven. It will be the feeling of complete respect—the feeling of kneeling at the feet of one who is immeasurably superior to ourselves in everything, that will make up the greatest happiness of heaven. This is a hard saying, and no man can understand it, save he to whom it is given by the Spirit of God.

That the apostles *had* this feeling of immeasurable respect for Christ there is no doubt, else they would never have been apostles. But they felt more than this. There were other wonders in that glorious vision besides the countenance of our Lord. His raiment, too, was changed, and became all brilliant, white as the light itself. Was not *that* a lesson to them? Was it not as if our Lord had said to them, ‘I am a king, and have put on glorious apparel; but whence does the glory of my raiment come? *I* have no need of fine linen, and purple, and embroidery, the work of men’s hands; *I* have no need to send my subjects to mines and caves to dig gold and jewels to adorn my crown: the earth is mine and the fullness thereof. All this glorious earth, with its trees and its flowers, its sunbeams and its storms, is *mine*. *I* made it—*I* can do what I will with it. All the mysterious laws by which the light and the heat flow out for ever from God’s throne, to lighten the sun, and the moon, and the stars of heaven—they are mine. *I* am the light of the world—the light of men’s bodies as well as of their souls; and here is my proof of it. Look at Me. I am He that “decketh Himself with light as it were with a garment, who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.” This was the message which Christ’s glory brought the apostles—a message which they could never forget. The spiritual glory of His countenance had shown them that he was a spiritual king—that His



strength lay in the spirit of power, and wisdom, and beauty, and love, which God had given Him without measure; and it showed them, too, that there was such a thing as a spiritual body, such a body as each of us some day shall have if we be found in Christ at the resurrection of the just—a body which shall not hide a man's spirit when it becomes subject to the wear and tear of life, and disease, and decay; but a spiritual body—a body which shall be filled with our spirits, which shall be perfectly obedient to our spirits—a body through which the glory of our spirits shall shine out, as the glory of Christ's spirit shone out through His body at the transfiguration. Brethren, we know not yet what we shall be, but this we do know, that when He shall appear, "we shall be *like him*, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.)

Thus our Lord taught them by His appearance that there is such a thing as a spiritual body, while, by the glory of His raiment in addition to His other miracles, He taught them that He had power over the laws of nature, and could, in His own good time, "change the bodies of their humiliation, that they might be made like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working by which He is able to subdue all things to Himself."

But there was yet another lesson which the apostles learned from the transfiguration of our Lord. They beheld Moses and Elijah talking with Him:—Moses the great lawgiver of their nation, Elijah the chief of all the Jewish prophets. We must consider this a little to find out the whole depth of its meaning. You remember how Christ had spoken of himself as having come, not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them. You remember, too, how He had always said that He was the person of whom the Law and the Prophets had spoken.

Here was an actual sign and witness that His words were true—here was Moses, the giver of the Law, and Elijah, the chief of the Prophets, talking with Him, bearing witness to

Him in their own persons, and showing, too, that it was His death and His perfect sacrifice that they had been shadowing forth in the sacrifices of the law and in the dark speeches of prophecy. For they talked with Him of His death, which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. What more perfect testimony could the apostles have had to show them that Jesus of Nazareth, their Master, was He of whom the Law and the Prophets spoke—that He was indeed the Christ for whom Moses and Elijah, and all the saints of old, had looked; and that He was come, not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them? We can hardly understand the awe and the delight with which the disciples must have beheld those blessed three—Moses, and Elias, and Jesus Christ, their Lord, talking together before their very eyes. For of all men in the world, Moses and Elias were to them the greatest. All true-hearted Israelites, who knew the history of their nation, and understood the promises of God, must have felt that Moses and Elias were the two greatest heroes and saviours of their nation, whom God had ever yet raised up. And the joy and the honor of thus seeing them face to face, the very men whom they had loved and revered in their thoughts, whom they had heard and read of from their childhood, as the greatest ornaments and glories of their nation—the joy and the honor, I say, of that unexpected sight, added to the wonderful majesty which was suddenly revealed to their transfigured Lord, seemed to have been too much for them—they knew not what to say. Such company seemed to them for the moment heaven enough; and St. Peter, first finding words, exclaimed, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If thou wilt, let us build three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” Not, I fancy, that they intended to worship Moses and Elias, but that they felt that Moses and Elias, as well as Christ, had each a divine message, which must be listened to; and therefore, they wished that each of them might

have his own tabernacle, and dwell among men, and each teach his own particular doctrine and wisdom in his own school. It may seem strange that they should put Moses and Elias so on an equality with Christ, but the truth was, that as yet they understood Moses and Elias better than they did Christ. They had heard and read of Moses and Elijah all their lives—they were acquainted with all their actions and words—they knew thoroughly what great and noble men the Spirit of God had made them, but they did *not* understand Christ in like manner. They did not yet *feel* that God had given Him the Spirit without measure—they did not understand that He was not only to be a lawgiver and a prophet, but a sacrifice for sin, the conqueror of death and hell, who was to lead captivity captive, and receive inestimable gifts for men. Much less did they think that Moses and Elijah were but His servants—that all *their* spirit and *their* power had been given by Him. But this also they were taught a moment afterwards; for a bright cloud overshadowed them, hiding from them the glory of God the Father, whom no man hath seen or can see, who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto; and out of that cloud a voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him;" and then, hiding their faces in fear and wonder, they fell to the ground; and when they looked up, the vision and the voice had alike passed away, and they saw no man but Christ alone. Was not that enough for them? Must not the meaning of the vision have been plain to them? They surely understood from it that Moses and Elijah were, as they had ever believed them to be, great and good, true messengers of the living God; but that their message and their work was done—that Christ, whom they had looked for, was come—that all the types of the law were realized, and all the prophecies fulfilled, and that henceforward Christ, and Christ alone, was to be their Prophet and their Lawgiver. Was not this plainly the meaning of the Divine voice? For when

they wished to build three tabernacles, and to honor Moses and Elijah, the Law and the Prophets, as separate from Christ, that moment the heavenly voice warned them: "*This—this* is my beloved Son—hear ye *Him*, and Him only, henceforward." And Moses and Elijah, their work being done, forthwith vanished away, leaving Christ alone to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, and all other wisdom and righteousness that ever was or shall be. This is another lesson which Christ's transfiguration was meant to teach them and us, that Christ alone is to be henceforward our guide; that no philosophies or doctrines of any sort which are not founded on a true faith in Jesus Christ, and His life and death, are worth listening to; that God has manifested forth His beloved Son, and that Him, and Him only, we are to hear. I do not mean to say that Christ came into the world to put down human learning. I do not mean that we are to despise human learning, as so many are apt to do now-a-days; for Christ came into the world not to destroy human learning, but to fulfil it—to sanctify it—to make human learning true, and strong, and useful, by giving it a sure foundation to stand upon, which is the belief and knowledge of His blessed self. Just as Christ came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them—to give them a spirit and a depth in men's eyes which they never had before—just so He came to fulfil all true philosophies, all the deep thoughts which men had ever thought about this wonderful world and their own souls, by giving *them* a spirit and a depth which *they* never had before. Therefore let no man tempt you to despise learning, for it is holy to the Lord.

There is one more lesson which we may learn from our Lord's transfiguration: when St. Peter said, "Lord! it is good for us to be here," he spoke a truth. It *was* good for him to be there; nevertheless, Christ did not listen to his prayer. He and his two companions were not allowed to stay in that glorious company. And why? Because they

had a work to do. They had glad tidings of great joy to proclaim to every creature, and it was, after all, but a selfish prayer, to wish to be allowed to stay in ease and glory on the mount while the whole world was struggling in sin and wickedness below them; for there is no meaning in a man's calling himself a Christian, or saying that he loves God, unless he is ready to hate what God hates, and to fight against that which Christ fought against, that is, sin. No one has any right to call himself a servant of God, who is not trying to do away with some of the evil in the world around him. And, therefore, Christ was merciful when, instead of listening to St. Peter's prayer, He led the apostles down again from the mount, and sent them forth, as He did afterwards, to preach the Gospel of the kingdom to all nations. For Christ put a higher honor on St. Peter by that than if he had let him stay on the mount all his life, to behold His glory, and worship and adore. And He made St. Peter more like Himself by doing so. For what was Christ's life? Not one of deep speculations, quiet thoughts, and bright visions, such as St. Peter wished to lead, but a life of fighting against evil; earnest, awful prayers and struggles within, continual labor of body and mind without, insult and danger, and confusion, and violent exertion, and bitter sorrow. This was Christ's life—this is the life of almost every good man I ever heard of;—this was St. Peter, and St. James, and St. John's life afterwards. This was Christ's cup, which they were to drink of as well as He;—this was the baptism of fire with which they were to be baptized as well as He;—this was to be their fight of faith;—this was the tribulation through which they, like all other great saints, were to enter into the kingdom of heaven; for it is certain that the harder a man fights against evil, the harder evil will fight against him in return: but it is certain, too, that the harder a man fights against evil, the more he is like his Saviour Christ, and the more glorious will be his

reward in heaven. It is certain, too, that what was good for St. Peter is good for us. It is good for a man to have holy and quiet thoughts, and at moments to see into the very deepest meaning of God's word and God's earth, and to have, as it were, heaven opened before his eyes; and it is good for a man sometimes actually to *feel* his heart overpowered with the glorious majesty of God, and to *feel* it gushing out with love to his blessed Saviour; but it is not good for him to stop there, any more than it was for the apostles; they had to leave that glorious vision and come down from the mount, and do Christ's work; and *so have we*; for, believe me, one word of warning spoken to keep a little child out of sin,—one crust of bread given to a beggar-man, because he is your brother, for whom Christ died,—one angry word checked, when it is on your lips, for the sake of Him who was meek and lowly in heart; in short, any, the smallest, endeavor of this kind to lessen the quantity of evil which is in yourselves, and in those around you, is worth all the speculations, and raptures, and visions, and frames, and feelings in the world; for those are the good *fruits* of faith, whereby alone the tree shall be known, whether it be good or evil.

## XXXIV.

### IMPORT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

McCLINTOCK.

[JOHN McCLINTOCK, D. D., LL. D., an eminent Christian scholar and divine of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was born in Philadelphia in 1814, and in his twenty-first year graduated at the University of Pennsylvania. For eight years he ably edited the "Methodist Quarterly Review." During the whole of the late war, he was pastor of the American Chapel in Paris, and bore eloquent testimony for his imperiled country. In 1867 he became president of the Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, N. J., and died in March 1870. The "Theological and Biblical Cyclopaedia," yet uncompleted, attests his comprehensive and exact scholarship. "He walked with God," (states Bishop Janes), consecrating to His service "a capacious, symmetrical, and active mind, a gentle and philanthropic spirit, a social and sympathetic nature." From "Living Words," published by Carlton & Lanahan, New York, the following Sermon—preached while pastor of St. Paul's M. E. Church, N. Y., in 1857—is extracted by permission.]

*"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."*—1 Cor. xi. 26.

I PURPOSE this morning speaking of the Lord's Supper. I can only do this in certain aspects of the subject, because to treat of it in full, in its nature and in its relation to the Church and to the individual, would require a whole series of sermons. Every name we give it implies a different aspect. We call it the Eucharist—a feast of thanksgiving; the Lord's Supper—that is to say, a feast in which we have communion with Christ at his own invitation. There are a great many names, and each of them is significant.

A preliminary remark upon the sacraments of the Gospel: We have two sacraments—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. There were two rites in the old dispensation to which these

correspond—Circumcision, and the Passover; the one the rite of initiation, and the other the rite of confirmation. There must be such rites as these in every religious organization, and there is something analogous to them in every form of organization. The right of initiation under the old law was circumcision, performed once, and once only, upon a subject who was a mere passive recipient. So the rite of baptism in the New Testament is performed once, and once only, and upon a passive recipient. There is nothing voluntary about the sacrament considered in itself; the subject receives the baptism—the effusion of the water, the pouring of it or the immersion in it—by some other hand. On the contrary, the right of confirmation under the old law was the passover, which included certain acts on the part of the partaker, as well as the outward and visible elements of the sacrament itself. The lamb had to be procured and slain, and was then roasted and eaten: all these implying voluntary acts of the participant. So in this sacrament there is God's part in providing the elements and constituting them what they are; and, on the other hand, the participation of the voluntary communicants who go to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and partake of the emblems of the sacrament—eat and drink them. This little simple statement, if you will carry it home and think about it, will put aside many of the strange and difficult questions which have got about these two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The one is the rite of initiation, and the other the rite of confirmation. You can very easily see, if it be discussed whether children or grown people are to be baptized—whether by sprinkling, or pouring, or immersion—how trifling these differences are when compared with the real substance. They are akin to the disputes as to whether the bread should be leavened or unleavened, whether the wine should be fully pressed or fermented, or drunk from cups of silver or glass. All these are minor



questions. We are to be baptized by water, and the form matters not; we are invited to communion with the Lord Jesus, and the materials are simple bread and wine. And if the sacrament is in that form, the other things are minor and of no importance.

Let us contemplate the real substance of this sacrament for us as Christian people.

I. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper looks back upon the past, and in that sense is a memorial.

II. It has relation to the present time and our present personal condition, and in this sense is a means of grace.

III. It looks forward prophetically to the future, and in this sense is a pledge of everlasting life to all who worthily partake of it.

I. This sacrament looks back upon the past, and in this sense is a memorial. It is a commemorative ordinance. Commemorative of—what? Of that for the very purpose of which it was instituted—the circumstances under which it was instituted. Ah, how apt we are to forget our benefactors! How apt we are to forget even those that we love! Take that single sentence home now and see if it is not so. Ten or twenty years ago you buried some one out of your sight, and it seemed as if the very light of your life were gone—a light that could never come back again; and you said so—that it should be never more. And yet that loved image now stands away back in the distance, dim and shadowy, and it is only when some memorial, some type, some sign, some sacrament brings back the recollection, that the old love is felt. It is not gone, I admit; but we are so apt to forget. And so we forget our greatest benefactors. Mankind are prone to remember those that hurt them, rather than the benefactor who brings blessings at every step of his path in life.

Hack a tree with an axe, and the scar remains for ages. The circles that gather around in the effort of nature to

obliterate it seem more and more to perpetuate it. But the care of the gardener who planted it, who watched and watered it, that is all forgotten. So it is with men. Even that great sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, the purchase of our redemption by that bitter death, even the circumstances of that death itself, we are apt to forget unless perpetually reminded. And so, in this aspect, the very institution of the Lord's Supper is a kind of condescension on the part of God to our weakness and infirmity; and whenever the Church administers the sacrament, whether once a month or once a week, it is intended as a sign, a memorial, a picture of the Lord Jesus, a painting of the crucifixion, a sculpture for us, if our imaginative faith be strong enough to take in all the scene upon Calvary. Nay, more, not merely a painting or statue, but bringing back again, if our eye of faith be strong enough to see it, the living, breathing, suffering, dying Saviour as he hung there upon the cross, with the blood still flowing through his veins and arteries strong and quick as in the flush of his manly life; then as it ebbed away and he became weaker and weaker, paler and paler, until at last he died. This sacrament is thus meant to be a memorial and bring back to us the day of our Saviour's death, the nights of his humiliation in the grave. "This do in remembrance of me."

There is special fitness in the matter of the institution as well as in the form: in the bread and wine which constitute the matter of the sacraments. The bread—we take it, and it is broken, and we eat it; the wine—it is poured out, and we drink it. And what are these? The bread, how is it made? That bread cannot be made for you every day as the nourishment for your physical frame, except at this expense: the beautiful grain must be taken at its maturity, the beautiful head of wheat must be rudely cut down, and then it passes into the hands of the laborer, or under the hoof of the horse, or beneath the thrashing-flail, or into

the pressure of the machine, until it is stripped of its husk, and life is entirely taken from it so far as outward and material instruments can do it, and then it is put between the upper and nether mill-stone and ground to powder. And that is not all. You must take it and cause the elements of death to show themselves; the putrefaction of fermentation must begin before you can have the light, beautiful, life-preserving bread. And so with the wine. You cannot get the mantling wine, with its beautiful color and refreshing properties, except by taking the grape in the full blush of its bloom and richness, and cutting it from the vine, and subjecting it to pressure, and after that to fermentation, that out of destruction and death shall be brought the life-producing, life-preserving wine.

So it is with our Lord and Saviour. He lived; but if he had only lived there would have been no life for us. He lived and died upon the cross that you and I might live; that is to say, this bread of God came down from heaven to be our nourishment. It had to be cut off in its full bloom, to be subject to the flail, to the pressure and power of the mill, to be ground between the upper and the nether mill-stone, to be laid in the grave, and the beginning of its corruption to appear, and then its resurrection; and now it is possible for Christ to be the living bread coming down from heaven, and whoever eats of it shall live for evermore. The bread and the wine are alike emblematic of the strength which the Church receives, and through her each individual member, from this blessed communion with Christ, which we commemorate when we partake of the Supper of the Lord. So we commemorate his sorrows and sufferings in this way for our own sake. And how rich a blessing is it that such a commemoration is given!

And further, our faith in Christ is excited by these emblems, as he is "evidently set forth among us crucified and slain." If we come to this sacrament remembering what

this bread and wine are an emblem of, and our hearts are filled with it, this passage will be true, that here, as we surround the altar of God, "Christ is visibly set forth among us crucified and slain," for "visibly" is what is meant by the word "evidently" in the passage; the effect of the memorial being to bring us back to the cross, to bring the cross down to us. That is the effect of it if we come with a living and true faith to partake of the blessed sacrament. By this commemoration we feel the dripping blood of Christ as if we had sat under his cross; the anguish of those pains we feel as if we had seen them on Calvary. The spear that pierced my Saviour's side has rotted long ago; the cross on which they hung him has passed away, gone into corruption; but the water and blood that flowed on the piercing of his side by the soldier—the terror and anguish and pain that he endured upon that bitter cross—all these are as fresh as if the cross had been reared but yesterday, and Christ hung upon it to-day. Our faith brings them to us, because the efficacy of that cross and of Christ's redemption is an everlasting efficacy.

There is another aspect of this commemorative feature of the sacrament to which I must call your attention: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till he come." We show it as an historical testimony of the fact of his death. Every time the followers of Jesus Christ gather around his table and partake of the bread and wine as emblems of his broken body and shed blood, they add an additional evidence to the truth of the Gospel history. This ordinance is a perpetual memorial and proof of the facts of Christ's death, and the professed objects of it. Can you find a day in history, from the day of Christ's institution of this sacrament the night before he died, on which it has not been observed? No single week has rolled away these eighteen hundred and thirty years—no single week has rolled away, since the hour of Christ's

consecration of the bread and wine of this ordinance until now, in which there has not been a gathering to testify to this truth. There gather a few of them sadly and in tears within a few days after the death of the Saviour. They gather in stronger numbers and with stronger hopes after the day of Pentecost, and so the bread is broken and the wine poured out and Christ remembered, and his death borne witness to. So, then, brethren, we too are as historical witnesses to the fact of Christ's death, and every time we come here we add one new stone to the great fabric of Christian evidence, one new testimony to the truth of this Gospel. There is something, to my mind, very striking and very beautiful in this one single evidence of the truth of Christianity—that you cannot point to any other beginning of this sacrament than that recorded, and that there is no stronger historical proof of any event than the commemoration in honor of it. Such is our fourth of July; and if it should be only celebrated as it is, once in each year, yet at the end of ten thousand years the force of it as a testimony would be just as great as it is now, unless some one could point to the day when it was instituted without foundation. In history testimony of this kind is considered better than almost any other. But we do more than this as witnesses, and not only testify to the fact of Christ's death, but testify to it with praise and approbation. The cross of the Lord Jesus was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to us who believe, it is the power of God unto salvation; that is to say, as often as we eat of this bread and drink this wine, we show the death of the Lord until he come, and in coming around this altar we come to say, What? That the cross of Christ is no longer a stumbling-block of foolishness, that to us the offence of the cross is taken away for ever; not merely that it is not offensive, but that it is our crowning glory that we have a right to come to it and say, with a higher emphasis than Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the

power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." And when we surround this altar we come as witnesses to a fact and to the glory of a fact, each of us taking up the strain, and saying, "I joy and glory in the cross of Christ;" each one of us says, "I testify to the power of the religion of the Redeemer;" each one of us says as Paul says, and with a higher emphasis, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

II. The second aspect of the sacrament is its relation to the present as a means of grace. Christ died, and we commemorate the sacrifice; but more than this, he *rose again*, and is with us here, a living Saviour. Bread and wine come again in types, types of the nourishment of life and its preservation. We have in this sacrament the communion of his body and blood, which nourishes and sanctifies us in this life and prepares us for everlasting life in heaven.

The tree of life which stood in the garden of Eden was sacramental, and to eat of the tree was the law of the preservation of life under the Adamic covenant. The covenant was this: "Eat and thou shalt live. Here is the tree of life; the matter of this sacrament is the fruit of this tree, and thou shalt eat of it and shalt live." When Adam was banished the sacrament was revoked; the tree of life was guarded by cherubim with flaming swords turning every way. But under the promise that Christ should come again, under all dispensations—Abrahamic and Mosaic—all the way along up to the time when Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, you will find some sacrament, some sign between God and man. The tree of paradise was the ante-type of the paschal blood that saved Israel's first-born in the hour when the angel of death passed over Egypt; of the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night; of the manna that sustained them in the desert, and of the pass-over established in the promised land and kept up until the

coming of the Lord Jesus. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was substituted for the passover. Christ our Passover is slain for us. All these were in their time means of grace, comforting and sustaining. The Israelite was likely to doubt the strength and willingness of God to carry him onward, but could be convinced by Moses suddenly pointing upward, "See there! behold that rising vapor as it curls above the marching millions of Israel, and then no longer doubt!" So in the hour of night and darkness the same leader and guide could tell him, "See there! behold that pillar of fire, beginning over the ark, ascending, and widening as it ascends! That is the type and pledge of God's promise to his people." And so in all ages the natural heart of man has seen in the rainbow spanning the sky the type of God's attributes of mercy and grace, and all people in all ages have looked up to that unimaginable beauty as a sacrament between God and man, an assurance that God's blessing should never more fail to mankind.

In the Lord's Supper we come to refresh ourselves more than the Israelites could in sight of the cloud and fire, and be fed more than they could by the manna, for our celestial manna is the bread of this sacrament, and whosoever eateth and drinketh in the name of the Lord Jesus eateth and drinketh to his salvation. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" How can this be true? It is really and literally true that in coming to this communion Christ is actually and substantially to be partaken of by those who believe on him. I do not mean that the bread and wine are turned into the physical body of the Lord Jesus. What a delusion that is that anything is substantial that can be seen and touched! The least substantial are those that can be seen or touched. The substance of this outward physical form is that which we cannot see. We do not even know what it is. Take the substance of the oak wood or pine wood.

You do not know what the substance of it is at all; you know certain outward properties which it possesses, but that is all. Christ is really and substantially present with his children in this sacrament. Though we do not see him, or eat of his body in a tangible and physical sense, or drink of his blood, yet we do really find our Saviour in those memorials of him. Let me illustrate this by a single case out of the Gospel. Our Saviour, passing through a great crowd of people, suddenly said, "Who is it that touched me, for I find virtue has gone out of me?" Yet no one had touched his person, his face, or hands, or feet, or any part of his body. It was nothing but a poor woman who had taken hold of the outer edge of his long robe, perhaps four or five feet from his person; only the hem of his garment was touched, and yet the touch brought life to her, and the Saviour knew it, and said, "Some one hath touched me." So when we come to surround this table, and come so near to Christ as to take the emblems of his body and blood, we are nearer than to be touching the very hem of his garment. If we have faith to believe it, our Saviour is with us.

We are nourished in our souls, in our love for him, in our purposes of good, and get ourselves strengthened to bear the ills, temptations, and shocks of life, and to prepare for death and judgment. And so we have often found a means of grace in this communion. When our faith is strong in it

"Our spirits drink a fresh supply,  
And eat the bread so freely given,  
Till, borne on eagle's wings, we fly,  
And banquet with our Lord in heaven."

If there be a doubting Thomas in the congregation who has never been able fully to realize our Lord, and has been going for years with his head bowed down, I say come to the communion, to the altar of God, if you are willing to see Him. Do this in remembrance of Christ, and open your eyes, and you shall see the hole caused by the spear of the soldier, and put your hand in it; you shall see the wounds



in his hands and feet; you shall see him with his body broken and crushed for you, and you shall be led to say, "My Lord and my God." Come, and let this communion be for you the means of grace. How many have felt in surrounding this altar not only their own resolutions renewed, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost renewed, fresh power given to them, and that the mysterious manifestation of grace in the sacrament has renewed their faith as followers of Christ!

III. Looking toward the future, we find in this sacrament a pledge of glory and everlasting life. "He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." There Christ institutes this supper, and tells His followers that it is His supper and His supper of communion, but that he will drink it no more with them until the fulfilment of the kingdom of God. Then he will drink it and join them again in it; then an everlasting supper will be renewed—an everlasting supper of the Lamb—and not till then. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup you do show the Lord's death till He come." That is to say, we are keeping up a memorial of it here in the wilderness until He shall come again; until the wilderness shall blossom as the rose. And surely this communion is a pledge of that coming—a seal and assurance of it. As often as we partake of it we know that our Master shall come. He comes to us in the communion itself as a pledge of that last coming. More than this, the Lord's Supper is to last until His coming, but no longer. We are not to have it in this shape in heaven. It is a memorial of Christ's coming. Whenever a pledge is given it is given as security that a certain contract shall be performed, and when it is performed the pledge is given up. So it shall be with the

Lord's Supper; when Christ's kingdom is come the Lord's Supper shall end. But what shall take its place? The Lord's Supper is a pledge and earnest of the marriage feast of the Lamb. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude," writes John on the Island of Patmos, "and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Every time we surround this altar and partake of the Lord's Supper we have a pledge, a foretaste and assurance of that great marriage supper of the Lamb, an invitation to which shall be the crowning glory of every redeemed soul. Oh, to be sure of that invitation! Oh, to be sure of the wedding-garment! that when these guest tables are prepared, and these viands of heaven are set out by celestial servitors, when the fruits of the immortal garden are for the Lord's army, and the vines of the heavenly vineyards have been pressed by the Lord's husbandmen, and the everlasting bread of the kingdom of glory shall be set out on the golden plates and dishes of that great banqueting-house, that I may be called, and my seat be ready, that I may have only to come at the sound of the last trump and obey the willing impulse of my own regenerated and redeemed soul; that my ears may be open to listen when that sound which shall wake the dead to life shall burst upon the darkness and silence! Then the angels shall carry me to the entrance of that great banqueting-hall, and I shall rise with the marriage festal garments on me, ready to enter in! This is what the Lord pledges me when I partake of it, and what he pledges you; the assurance of redemption and the pledge of immortal life.

## XXXV.

### THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

GOULBURN.

[EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., a distinguished living minister in the Established Church of England, and one of the royal chaplains, held the mastership of Rugby School in early life. In 1850 he delivered a series of the Bampton Lectures—a famous course instituted to develop the doctrines and evidences of Christianity;—and he was lately installed Dean of Norwich. His writings comprise: “The Idle Word,” short religious essays on the gift and right use of speech; “Acts of the Deacons,” treating of Stephen the protomartyr and Philip the evangelist; “Office of the Holy Communion,” and “Thoughts on Personal Religion.” These are characterized by a spirit of fervid and practical piety, manifested with a transparency of thought and language. This Sermon, preached in Rugby School Chapel, summarizes the teachings of the first work.]

*“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.”—James iii. 2-4.*

THE Apostle is speaking, in these verses, of the government of the Tongue.

And he says of the government of the Tongue two distinct things, which are not to be confounded together,—both strong things to say, but the latter stronger than the former.

First, he says that the degree in which a man governs his Tongue is an index of his whole moral state. An index. The hands of a watch, or the projection on a sundial, are an index, by which you may ascertain the progress of time, or in other words, how much of his course in the heavens the

sun has accomplished. The sun (or rather the earth in its diurnal revolution) travels silently and without noise. In order to be advertised at any moment of the sun's exact stage of progress, we create an artificial index—the watch, or the dial,—which reports that progress with accuracy. Similarly, our moral life, though always moving either forward or backward (for, my brethren, it is a solemn truth that there is no standing still in moral life), yet moves slowly and imperceptibly; as we cannot *see* the sun moving (although after it has moved, we note that it is in a different quarter of the heavens), so we cannot see ourselves growing better or worse (although, after a lapse of time, we may take notice that we are more or less good than we were a year or six months ago). It is desirable, therefore, to have an exact index, by recurring to which, we may ascertain our moral progress. And this index, the Apostle says, is the Tongue. That is the thought of verse 2. Keep it distinct in your minds.

But something more than this,—a further, and stronger statement,—is yet behind.

The government or non-government of the Tongue is not only an index. It is also a determining instrument. It is spoken of under the images of a bit and a rudder. Now what is a bit?—an instrument which determines the course of a horse, which makes him turn to the right or to the left, which, if loose in his mouth, leaves him to a free and speedy action, and, if drawn tight, arrests his progress. Just so a rudder with a ship;—it is the guiding instrument of the vessel's course. With the rudder you may turn the ship at a moment's notice as you please, but the guidance of a vessel which has lost her rudder, by the sails, is at all times a very difficult and dangerous matter,—not likely to prosper in any but the most expert hands.

Now this image, you observe, is an advance upon the index. The hands of the watch, and the index of the dial,

do not *determine* the Sun's course, nor have they the slightest influence upon it. They *mark* and *announce* its progress; but they in no way bias its course, as the helm biasses the course of the ship, and the bit biasses the course of the horse.

Now, then, I will say a word on these two great topics—the Tongue as the index of our moral career, and the Tongue as the governing instrument of our moral career.

To those of you who are striving to be holy, and to imitate the example of our Saviour, do I now address myself. And I pray that what I say may be made, by God, the means of helping you in that pursuit.

First, the Tongue as an index. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Only one perfect Man ever existed; and of Him—in perfect accordance with the principle here laid down by the Apostle—it is written, not only that He *did* no sin, but also that "no guile was found in His mouth," that "when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not,"—and, in another place, that "full of grace were His lips." The words of the text are not to be taken as implying that any man (except Him) is, in the judgment of God, perfect, but simply as asserting that the more closely any one approximates to perfection, the more vigilantly will he be found to govern his tongue, so that his performance of this duty supplies an accurate touchstone of his advance in holiness.

And this will become quite obvious if we reflect, first, that to govern the tongue is a task so difficult, that he who has grace to accomplish *it*, has grace to accomplish anything. The exceeding great difficulty of governing the tongue consists principally in the great scope there is for going wrong. Other temptations only have scope for their enticements occasionally. When a man is in health and spirits, friends all around him, and affluence and prosperity his portion, he has no temptation to murmur. When he is poor, and obliged to

toil hard for a day's livelihood, there is no great scope for self-indulgence. If he lives a very retired life, and comes into little or no collision with society, of course his temper and courtesy are not tried. If he is obliged to be busy about a work which demands close attention of the mind, there is no avenue by which an unclean thought can insinuate itself. But *because the business of life cannot be carried on without speaking*, there is always ample verge and scope enough for offences of the tongue. In our least talkative day, the words which we speak from morning to night, if written down, would almost fill a volume. Speech is continually passing from us by a thousand avenues of occasion,—we want something, or desire information, or have some intelligence to communicate, or wish to please, or must do something to while away time, or to vent our feelings of irritation and peevishness. Even the reasonable and necessary occasions of speech—the occasions, on which without speech the business of society could not be carried on, are very, very numerous.

So that the reason why the government of the Tongue is more arduous than any other duty, is the reason why it is more difficult for a military commander to maintain a town which has a thousand outlets, than one which is only accessible at two or three points. In the latter case the garrison may be concentrated at the two or three vulnerable points. In the former, they must be dispersed in weak handfuls at the various outlets. Of course we gather with certainty that, if the force suffices to maintain the city with many approaches, it will suffice to maintain the city with few. And the Word of God (all whose reasonings are, if I may say so, the reasonings of Inspired Common Sense) infers upon the same principle that he who can stand against sin successfully, where the avenues of temptation are numerous, can stand also where they are few. “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.”

But now for a second reason why the tongue should be an accurate index of the moral state. Offences of the tongue are thought so little of by mankind in general, that he who is strict with himself here will be strict with himself, we may be sure, in all departments of duty. If he thinks gravely of wrong words, he cannot think lightly of wrong actions. You know how very little importance men generally attach to sins of the tongue—how strangely their judgment on this point is contrasted with that of Him who said,—“Every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Is not the tendency of our minds to reason thus—“A hasty word, vented in a moment of excitement—a slight misrepresentation, a profane joke, an impure innuendo,—why it is all empty breath,—nothing serious is intended by it, and a man may be a very good man, who indulges in such words occasionally”? Such is the prevalent notion. It is radically erroneous. It is wholly contrary to God’s Word. It is probably glanced at in the third Commandment, where, after forbidding the taking His Name in vain, a sin which could not find place except in the exercise of the tongue, the Divine Legislator solemnly adds—“*The Lord* will not hold him guiltless” (oh, verdict of the world, how wilt thou shrivel up into insignificance when God reveals His Judgment at the last day!)—“The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.” But however, such is the sad fact, that men do take a very light view of sins of the tongue, very much lighter than they do of other violations of duty. Now, if a man should be found, who, in his own case, takes a very grave view of this subject, watches and weighs his words strictly, and rejects scrupulously all that it comes into his mind to say, which would not tend either to some good end or to *innocent* amusement,—it is impossible, is it not, that that man should be a careless liver? The care of his words is the index of a general care

over what men reckon more important than words, —actions, and feelings.

Then the point seems to be proved by reason, as well as asserted in Scripture, that an accurate index of a man's entire moral condition is supplied by the government of his Tongue. Weigh it well. Just as you resort to the sundial or the watch for the reckoning of time, so in your spiritual reckoning, in your acts of Self-Examination, you may consult the index of the tongue, with the assurance that it will give no untrue verdict. To persons disposed to engage seriously in that arduous work, and yet beset (as we all are here) with manifold business,—this thought may really be a material assistance. You wish to examine your whole moral character and life? Examine the words of the past day,—they may be a sufficient criterion. Have you been watchful over them, or have you let them slip, without reflection, from your mouth? Have you governed them—that is, inspected them before utterance, rejected one, approved another, chastised a third, and so on? or, have you thrown the reins of self-discipline down, and let them take their course?

I am sure, from reason and the Word of God, that this will be a true index; that it will never give an inaccurate verdict. But oh! is not this an alarming thought to many of you? Ought it not at once to awaken you to the truth of your state, as with trumpet call? For there are very many of you who, so long as you do not go wrong in your lives, give yourselves no concern at all about your words. They may be good this hour, and bad the next, so far as your superintendence is concerned,—for you never think of controlling them. And if vigilance over the words be, as God asserts it to be, the criterion of vigilance over the life—what is the conclusion? What, but that you are taking no heed to administer your general conduct after the precepts of God, and give, therefore, the surest proof that, whatever



outward privileges may attach to your lot, you have no spiritual life dwelling in you?

But now to turn to the other image. The tongue is not only the index, but the determining instrument also of our moral state. It not only points out, but regulates,—as the bit regulates the horse, and the helm the ship. This position is equally apparent, when we come to examine it, with the former.

Take, as an example, the case of temper. A man has a strong temper, exceedingly irritable, and hard to overcome. If he is a man with no self-discipline, this temper bursts forth continually, and renders himself, and all around him, miserable. He is sensible of its mastery, and in his cool moments, deploras it. Well, there is one obvious rule of wisdom which, if he clings to it steadfastly, will, by God's Grace, enable him to curb the unruly passion. He complains that he cannot control his feelings,—they are like a fretful steed, too much for his rider, and they bear him away whither they list. Granted (for argument's sake) that he cannot control his feelings;—can he not control his words? Can he not, if he pleases, refrain from speaking? or if he pleases, utter a conciliatory expression? Let him go into society, after prayer for the aid of God's Spirit, with a steadfast resolution, that come what may—slight, or ridicule, or insult—and feel what he may,—he, at all events, will not *say* a single irritating or irritable word. I will suppose him, by God's grace, to keep his resolution. What is the result? The result is, that the trial, if it comes at all, does not last very long. If the other party is not really bent on provocation, the whole feeling passes off—perhaps veers right round in another direction—as this want of intention becomes apparent. And if he is bent on provocation, he soon wearies of it when he is met by soft words that turn away wrath,—he begins to respect the principle which he instinctively feels to be at the root of this moderation,—perhaps he ends by

acknowledging the fault, and expressing regret,—an issue which insures an entire conversion of feeling towards him in the mind of the other. Whereas what would an angry retort have done? It would simply have ministered fuel for irritation to both minds.

Again, as regards secret pride. Pride is a swelling haughty steed, who will bear away triumphant all who minister occasion to it. And occasion will be ministered to it by words—by talking too much about self—whether in the way of self-gratulation, or in the way of self-depreciation. I am sure that language of the latter description really feeds and nourishes secret pride, and if much indulged in, will probably render it ungovernable. Avoid, by all means, speaking humbly of yourself to any one except to Him who seeth in secret. The reason is this,—pride is so inwoven into the very texture of our nature, that *our feelings* are very rarely indeed humble. Now, *if there be humility of expression, where there is no humility of feeling, that is the worst species of hypocrisy.* But humble words are not only evil in themselves,—they excite evil. We derive a kind of satisfaction, when using them, from the reflection that we are humble,—we become inwardly proud of our humility. The safest rule (and that which is most consistent with courtesy and good breeding) will be to obtrude self as little as possible on the company—to speak as little as possible about self, in order that (oh, hard attainment!) we may think as little as possible about self. All words of self-praise, all words of self-depreciation, forbidden—if this rule be minded, it will prove the restraining of many a spark, which else might fall upon and kindle the explosive material of pride.

Again: as to that desire, natural to every man, of making himself entertaining and agreeable in the society in which he moves.

This desire, if not restrained, often leads us to say things which were better unsaid,—to give point to some of our con-

versation by a jest which is questionable, or to be bitterly sarcastic, or, at least, to exaggerate and misrepresent the truth. One objectionable remark, especially if successful in exciting wonder or amusement, is enough to ensnare us. The strong desire then becomes, like the horse whose rein is slackened, uncontrollable. We must then perforce go on in the career on which we have entered, and trick out our story with embellishments, without regard to the feelings of our neighbor, the interests of truth, or the Majesty of God's presence. Therefore that original error,—that first remark, which made the tongue too hot to hold,—had better have been restrained. And to restrain such remarks is utterly impossible without biting the horse, without exercising a continual restraint upon that little member, which boasteth great things.

I need not dwell, because that is so evident, upon the awful ascendancy which unclean desire gains over a man who allows himself to use impure language. Such a person is indeed, by the practice of telling forth the abominations which exist in his heart, feeding and pampering a viper, the poison of whose fangs will speedily spread itself, to his eternal ruin, through his whole soul. This is a subject to be meditated upon in secret, rather than to be spoken of in public. Suffice it that I have called your attention in that direction, and warned those who are willing to give heed.

It will have occurred, perhaps, to some of you, that in inculcating so strict a government of the tongue—(and by consequence so continual a watchfulness over it)—we have been investing Religion with a garb of gloom and austerity, and robbing it of all mirth and lightness of heart. I must speak, of course, without fear of consequences, what the Lord puts into my mouth; but God forbid that I should represent Religion to you as at all alien to pure enjoyment or innocent mirth. Wisdom's ways are pleasantness and peace. And let me say distinctly, that I am not forbidding any

words but such as God's Law pronounces to be evil. Innocent mirth and gayety, laughter at that which cannot wound another person, and is not wrong, and is not profane—so far from being an evil, is in a social (nay, in a religious) point of view a decided good. And a dull or moping spirit wilfully cherished, would be as contrary to the spirit of the Gospel as it is to our natural inclinations. Christ has done all for us, if we be His true followers,—has relieved us of the load of guilt, of corrupt inclinations, of carking care. If the great Burden-bearer bore those burdens for us, why are we to bear them ourselves? Why, if I can only realize these great things,—why should not a well of joy and thankfulness spring up within me, which shall make the heart ever merry and the countenance ever shining, and the mind accessible to all possible enjoyments which are pure?

Besides, one of the objects for which the tongue was given, is recreation; and this object would be frustrated, and life would not be relieved of its manifold little burdens, if conversation were not occasionally brightened with merriment. WE HAVE BEEN ADVOCATING CONTINUAL WATCHFULNESS, NOT CONTINUAL SERIOUSNESS, OF WORDS.

Finally: some will think that I have been dealing after all with petty duties, and that your time might have been occupied better with matters of more moment. In that case I must go back to my authorities:—"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." I have not said anything more serious about words than St. James and Our Blessed Lord say. Besides, the notion of not dealing with small duties is philosophically unsound. Life is made up of small things, small duties, small sins, small temptations, small troubles, small fragments of happiness. It has been much upon my mind lately, that to neglect these same small things is the height of folly,—that it is only through acquitting ourselves well on small occasions, that we can make a

sure progress in holiness, and discipline ourselves for grappling with poverty, bereavement, calls of Providence, arduous posts of responsibility, and all the great occasions of life. The man who waits for a great emergency, or a fine opportunity, to show and approve his religion, is in a fair way, I think, never to have any religion at all. And, therefore, it was that last Sunday I warned you to give heed to the good conduct of each day, as it presents itself,—assured that from the good conduct of days, the good conduct of years would follow.

And, therefore, it is, that I now warn you to give heed to your words. I tell you, on God's authority, that care over the words is the very secret and key of care over the life. Here I recommend you to bestow a great deal of study and attention,—with the assurance that it will not be thrown away. And, above all, I recommend you to pray, that God would so fill your soul at every moment with the thought of the Majesty of His Presence, as to make the restraint of wrong words an easy task to you—ay, and to convert that restraint into an act of continual Worship.

## XXXVI.

### MAN CONVERTED.

GUTHRIE.

[The editor of "The Sunday Magazine," THOMAS GUTHRIE, D.D., has a sturdiness of judgment wonderfully tempered by a passionateness of imagination, which—as the lightning-flash in a dark sky—lights up into visible being the obscurest recesses of thought. He was born at Brechin, Forfarshire, in 1803, studied for the ministry at St. Andrew's University, and in 1837 took charge of the Old Greyfriars parish in Edinburgh. In this poverty-stricken district, his philanthropic labors and practical aptitude for social reforms worked wonders. His appeals, by voice and pen, led to the founding of Ragged Schools, for the free teaching of poor children throughout the kingdom. In the formation of the Free Church, he actively co-operated with Dr. Chalmers. For entrancing and affecting power of illustration, his Sermons on "The Gospel in Ezekiel" are unexcelled. He died February 24th 1873.]

*"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."*—Ezekiel xxxvi. 26.

It is a happy thing that baptism is not the door of heaven;—happy for millions who, dying in earliest infancy, never pass that way. Dying unbaptized, we hold that they die not on that account unsaved; for whoever dare hang God's mercy on any outward rite, we do not, and although we believe that this interesting ordinance is also, when engaged in with faith, an eminently blessed one, we dare not. Thousands go to heaven without baptism. Thousands, alas! perish with it. Heaven is greatly made up of little children—sweet buds that have never blown, or which death has plucked from a mother's bosom to lay on his own cold breast, just when they were expanding, flower-like, from the sheath, and opening their engaging beauties in the budding

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time and spring of life. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." How sweet these words by the cradle of a dying infant! They fall like balm drops on our bleeding heart, when we watch the ebbing of that young life, as wave after wave breaks feebler, and the sinking breath gets lower and lower, till with a gentle sigh, and a passing quiver of the lip, our child now leaves its body, lying like an angel asleep, and ascends to the beatitudes of heaven and the bosom of God. Indeed, it may be that God does with his heavenly garden as we do with our own gardens. He may chiefly stock it from nurseries, and select for transplanting what is yet in its young and tender age—flowers before they have bloomed, and trees ere they begin to bear.

In the words of the Westminster Catechism, "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's." Baptism attaches us to the visible church; admits to *that*, and is its door of entrance; but, while it unites to the body of professing believers, it does not of necessity form any living attachment between us and the Saviour. Let us see what is done in these ordinances.

Years ago a man stood up in the house of God, and in his arms there lay a sleeping child. Dipping his hand into a laver, the minister sprinkled some drops on the infant's face, and over the unconscious creature pronounced the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That child was you. By hands, now mouldering in the grave, your father then tied you—so to speak—to Christ. Well, time rolls on, and infants grow into children, children shoot up into youths, and youths change into bearded men; and then there comes another day. A table is spread in the house of God. Like the shroud in which kind women swathed his sacred body, a linen cloth covers the memorials of Christ's

death. The broken body is uncovered, the commemoration begins; and, amid the stillness of that solemn scene, with thoughtful countenance, a man leaves his seat, and taking the bread, and raising the wine-cup in his hand, he dedicates himself to the Saviour. That man again is you. And now awake, not asleep, conscious of what is done, not passive but active now, with your own hands you cast another knot upon the cord by which your father years ago bound you to Jesus. You are now tied—doubly tied—yet it does not follow that you are yet engrafted into him.

I have seen a branch tied to the bleeding tree, for the purpose of being engrafted into its wounded body, and that thus both might be one. Yet no incorporation had followed; there was no living union. Spring came singing, and with her fingers opened all the buds; and summer came, with her dewy nights and sunny days, and brought out all the flowers; and brown autumn came to shake the trees and reap the fields, and with dances and mirth to hold "harvest home;" but that unhappy branch bore no fruit, nor flower, nor even leaf. Just held on by dead clay and rotting cords, it stuck to the living tree—a withered and unsightly thing. So alas! is it with many; "having a name to live they are dead." They have no faith; they want that bond of living union between the graft and what it is grafted on—between the sinner and the Saviour. And, therefore, in quitting this part of our subject for another, let me ask, "believest thou?" and if thou dost not, O, let me urge you to pray with the man in the Gospel, "Lord, help mine unbelief!"

Do you say, I cannot believe? In one sense, that is true; in another, it is not. It is not true in the same sense as it is true that a man who has no eyes in his head—nothing but empty sockets—cannot see. All men are born with faith. Faith is as natural to a man as grief, or love, or anger. One of the earliest flowers that springs up in the soul—it smiles on a mother from her infant's cradle; and



living on through the rudest storms of life, it never dies till the hour of death. On the face of a child which has been left for a little time with strangers, and may be caressed with their kisses, and courted with their smiles, and fondled and dandled in their arms, I have seen a cloud gathering and growing darker, till at length it burst in cries of terror and a shower of tears. The mother returns; and when the babe holds out its little arms to her, I see in these the arms of faith; and when, like a believer restored to the bosom of his God, it is nestling in a mother's embrace, and the cloud passes from its brow, and its tears are changed into smiles, and its terror into calm serenity, we behold the principle of faith in play. This is one of its earliest, and—so far as nature is concerned—one of its most beautiful developments. So natural, indeed, is it for us to confide, and trust, and believe, that a child believes whatever it is told, until experience shakes its confidence in human veracity. Its eye is caught by the beauty of some flower, or it gazes up with wonder on the starry heavens;—with that inquisitiveness which in childhood, active as a bee, is ever on the wing, it is curious to know who made them, and would believe you if you said you made them yourself. Such is the faith which nature gives it in a father, that it never doubts his word. It believes all he says, and is content to believe where it is not able to comprehend. For this, as well as other reasons, our Lord presented, in a child, the living model of a Christian. He left Abraham, father of the faithful, to his repose in heaven; he left Samuel, undisturbed, to enjoy the quiet rest of his grave; he allowed Moses and Elias, after their brief visit, to return to the skies, and wing their way back to glory. For a pattern of faith, he took a boy from his mother's side, and setting him up in his gentle, blushing, shrinking modesty, before the great assembly, he said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein."

Paul said, "When I was a child I spake as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things;" but no man ever thought of leaving the faith of childhood with its rattle and its toys. Faith is, in fact, the soul and life of friendship. What is a friend, but one whom I can trust, one who, I believe, will mingle his tears with mine, and whose support I reckon on when my back is at the wall? Without faith in each other's friendship, kindness, and honesty, this world would be turned into a Bedouin desert; men would become Ishmaelites;—my hand against every man, and every man's hand against me. Faith is the marriage tie; the guardian angel of conjugal felicity; the jewelled zone that binds society together; the power, mightier than steam, or wind, or water, that moves all the wheels of commerce. Unless man could trust his fellow-man, business would come to a dead stand; the whole machinery of the world would stop; our busy streets would bear crops of grass; and, though winds blew and tides flowed as before, rotting ships would fall to pieces in our silent and deserted harbors.

Leaving the busy city for rural scenes, or setting your foot on board ship, and pushing out upon the heaving ocean, you find faith ploughing the fields of both—faith in the laws of nature, in the ordinances of Providence. When the air has still a frosty breath, and, although cleared of winter snow, the earth is cold and—looks dead as a corpse disrobed of its shroud—it shows neither flower nor leaf, nor sign of life, the husbandman, notwithstanding, yokes his team and drives the ploughshare through its breasts. With confidence in his step, liberality in his hand, and hope in his eye, he scatters the seed far and wide on the bosom of the ground. He is a believer; a believer in Providence—in the laws and procession of the seasons. He has faith; not saving faith indeed, but still true faith. He believes that out of these frosty skies gentle zephyrs shall blow, and soft showers shall

fall, and summer beams shall shine; and, looking along the vista of time, he sees golden corn waving thick upon these empty fields, and hears in this silent scene the joy of light hearts ringing in the laugh and song of the reapers. His ploughing and his sowing are acts of genuine faith; and, as he strides across the field with his sowing sheet around him, he is an example of one who, with his eye as well as his foot on earth, "Walks by faith, not by sight."

Then again, sailing as much as sowing is an act of faith. In this rough and weather-beaten mariner, on board whose ship we are dashing through the thick gloom of a starless night, and over the waves of a pathless ocean, I see faith standing at the helm. That man has faith in the needle; and believing that the heart of an angel is not more true to God than this needle to the north, he presses forward over the watery waste in a voyage that may with perfect truth be called a voyage of faith. Would to God we had as strong a faith in our Bible! Would to God that our trembling hearts pointed as true to Jesus as this needle, in all weathers and on all seas, to the distant pole! What we want divine grace to do, is not so much to give us faith as to give to the principle or faculty of faith, which we have by nature, a right, holy, heavenward direction; to convert it into faith in things eternal. The faith that sees an unseen world—a faith just as strong in the revelations of the Bible as in the ordinary laws of nature, this is what we need. Let it be sought in earnest, persevering prayer. It is "the gift of God." Saving faith has God for its author, the Spirit for its agent, Christ for its object, grace for its root, holiness for its fruit, and heaven for its reward. Accepting the righteousness of Christ, it makes us just; and seeing every sin pardoned, all guilt removed, God smiling, and heaven opening to receive us, it is the spring of a peace of mind which is worth more than the wealth of worlds, which passeth all understanding. May God help us to the con-

fession and the prayer, "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

We have already stated that while salvation was the one thing needful, there were two things needful for salvation. Having considered the first of these, namely, the remission of sin and justification of the sinner, we now enter on the second, namely, the renovation of the soul as enunciated in the words, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." And we remark—

I. This is a great change. Not that all men think so. Once on a time, for instance, we wandered into a church in this city. The preacher read these words for his text, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And just as at the fords of Jordan, they knew a man's country by the way he sounded Shibboleth, so you will never fail to know a man's creed by the way in which he handles such a passage as that. The preacher read his text; and then, as it were, sat down by the cradle, where his charge was sleeping to rock them over into a deeper slumber. The text, forsooth, was an oriental figure! a hyperbole! pointing to an outward change. No more was needed. In the strong and highly figurative language which eastern nations indulge in, it described the change undergone by the man who abandons a wild and wicked life for habits of decency, honesty, and temperance. Far be it from me to speak lightly of temperance societies, or of any scheme, indeed, that aims at the dignity and elevation of man; yet, according to the preacher, our Lord's language meant nothing more than the change which these institutions are of themselves able to accomplish—a change of habits without any gracious change of heart. Did a drunkard become sober? he was born again; a libertine pure? or thief honest? or liar true? he was born again! In short,

such was the style and character of the discourse, that if a poor, hungry soul had gone there for bread, he could have got nothing—carried away nothing—but a stone; and instead of a fish, we saw the serpent's coil, and heard her hiss. The preacher taught that these words were applicable only to the scum and off-scourings of the city—the dregs of society—those poor, depraved, degraded creatures who, weighed down by a load of poverty, and ignorance, and guilt, have sunk to the bottom, and to our shame, are left to lie there in distressing and dreadful pollution. So far as any congregation of decent, well-dressed, sober, honest, reputable professors of religion were concerned, that truth had no bearing on them; our Lord—although he assuredly found in Nicodemus one of this class—did not speak of them; they, happy mortals! had no need to be born again.

You cannot fancy any two things more opposed to each other than that doctrine and ours. We believe that the purest, gentlest, loveliest, most amiable creature that blesses fond parents, and adorns earth's happiest home—one of nature's fairest flowers—stands as much in need of a new birth as the vilest outcast who walks these streets—the lost one, whose name is never mentioned but by broken hearts and in wrestling prayers to God. The best of mankind are so bad that all have need to be born again; so bad that the change promised in the text, and insisted on by our Saviour, cannot be a surface or superficial matter,—any mere defilement of the skin which nitre and soap may remove. Words have no meaning unless this change is a radical reform—a change great in its character, and lasting in its consequences—a change which, affecting not the habits only but the heart, both reaches downward into the deepest recesses of the soul, and stretches forward into the ages of eternity.

Now, I am afraid that some—dreaming, as they slumber, that they have been born again, and so are safe because

their conduct is changed, and because, so far as their mere habits are concerned, they are better than once they were—have gone to sleep before this work is even begun. Beware of rash conclusions of such momentous importance. Have we not seen passions, like the fire upon the hearth, burn out and die for want of fuel? Have we not seen the course of vice, like a worn-out machine, stop from the decays of nature—from the mere wear and tear of its materials? Virtue is cheap; vice is costly; and, proving a heavy tax upon the purse, destructive of health and damaging to character, we have seen self-interest turn a man from the indulgence of his strongest vices. Old age cools hot blood. Successive bereavements will in a way break the heart, and some deep disappointment may wean those who have the keenest appetite for its pleasures, from the gayeties and vanities of the world. And, as in Roman Catholic countries, many a cowed monk, and many a veiled nun, enters convent or monastery more from feelings of disappointment than devotion; so, when hopes are blasted, and pride is mortified, and ambition has missed her mark, you may get sick of the world. Alas! all who bid adieu to the ball-room and theatre, and giddy round of fashion, do not leave the circle of their enchantments for the closet, for the sanctuary, for fields of Christian benevolence. As by sleight of hand and necromantic trick, Egypt's magicians produced a set of mimic miracles that were clever counterfeits of those which God wrought by the hand of Moses, may not other causes than true love of holiness or godly hatred of sin work such an outward, as bears some considerable likeness to a saving change? In matters of religion, beware of confounding an *almost* with an *altogether* Christian. So far as it goes, any change for the better is good. We hail it with hope. It is good, so far as it goes, and good so long as it lasts; but Oh, let us not fall into the fatal mistake of confounding an outward reformation with that divine, inward, eternal trans-

formation which is wrought by the Spirit, and promised in the words, "A new heart also will I give you."

Leaving the nature of this change to be afterwards considered, let me attempt meanwhile to show that this is a great change. In illustration of the truth, look, I pray you, to the symbols under which it is presented in the Word of God.

*It is a birth.*

When an infant leaves the womb—that darksome dwelling, where it has passed the first stage of its existence,—although the same creature, it may be said to be a new creature, and to enter on a new being. How great the change from that living sepulchre, where it lay entombed, nor saw, nor heard, nor breathed, nor loved, nor feared, nor took any more interest than the dead in all that was happening around it! Alive, yet how like death its state has been! Having eyes, it saw not, and ears it heard not, and feet it walked not, and hands it handled not, and affections it felt not. Its state was a strange and mysterious mingling of the characters of life and death. When the windows of its senses are thrown open, and streams of knowledge come rushing in on its young and wondering soul, and its eyes follow the light, and with its restless hands it is acquainting itself with matter, and sounds are entering its ears, amid whose mingled din it soon learns to distinguish the sweet tones of one tender voice—its mother's, and it loves and is loved, and lies nestling in dreamy slumbers on her bosom, or sweetly smiles in her smiling face—how great the change! Now, just because the change wrought on the soul in conversion is also great, and introduces its subject into a new and delightful existence, it borrows a name from that change. That is the first, this is the second birth; ay, and infinitely the better of the two. Better! because in that a son of man is born but for the grave, whereas in this a son of God is born for glory. Better! because the march of these little feet is

along a rough path between a cradle and a coffin; whereas, the way of grace, however full of trials, toil, and battle, is from the pangs of birth onward and upward to a crown in heaven. Happy for you if you are heaven-born and heaven-bound. It may be that a stormy life lies before you; but let storms rage and tempests roar—however rude the gale or high the rolling billows—a heaven-born passenger in a heaven-bound bark, you cannot miss the haven. “There remaineth a rest to the people of God.”

*This change is a resurrection.* A resurrection is a great change. Go to the churchyard. Go where death shall one day carry you, whether you will or not. “Come,” said the angels, “see the place where the Lord lay.” Come, let us see the place where we ourselves shall lie, and look at man as we ourselves shall be. Take him in any of his stages of decay. Look at this compressed line of mould, that by its color marks itself out as different from the neighboring clay; it is black earth, and retains no apparent vestige of organization. What resemblance does it bear to a man? None. Yet gather it together and give it to the chemist; he analyzes it, and pronounces this unctuous dust to have been once a human creature. It may have been a beauty, who with alarm saw the roses fading on her cheek, and age tracing wrinkles on her ivory brow, and mixing in gray hairs with her raven locks. It may have been a beggar who, tired of his cold and hungry pilgrimage, laid his head gladly in the lap of mother earth, and ended his weary wanderings here. It may have been a king, who was dragged from amid his guards to the tomb, and sullenly yielded to the sway of a monarch mightier than himself. Or, look here at these yellow relics of mortality which the grave-digger—familiar with his trade—treats with such irreverent contempt. Look at these preachers of humility—at this mouldering skull, the deserted palace of a soul, within which high intellect once sat enthroned—at those



fleshless cheeks, once blooming with smiles and roses—at that skeleton hand, which may once have grasped the helm of public affairs, or swayed the passions of capricious multitudes, or held up the cross from sacred pulpits to the eyes of dying men—at those mouldering limbs, which piety may have bent to God—and at these hollow sockets—now the nest of slimy worms—where glances of love have melted, and looks of fire have flashed.

Turning away your head with horror and humiliation, to think that you shall lie where they are—and be as they are—you say, *Alas! what a change is there! Ah! but Faith steps forward, plants a triumphant foot on the black grave's edge, and silencing my fears, dispelling my gloom, and reconciling me to that lowly bed, she lifts her cheerful voice, and exclaims, True! but what a change shall be there! Looking through her eyes, I see the spell broken. I see that dust once more animate. And when the blast of the trumpet—penetrating the caves of the rocks, and felt down in the depths of ocean—pierces the ear of death in this dark, and cold, and lonely bed, where I have lowered a coffin, and left the dear form and sweet face of some loved one, mortality shall rise in form immortal, more beautiful than love ever fancied or poet sang. How great the change, when these mouldering bones, which children look at with fear, and grown men with solemn sadness, shall rise instinct with life! Think of this handful of brown dust springing up into a form like that on which Adam gazed with mute astonishment, when for the first time he caught the image of himself mirrored in a glassy pool of Paradise; or better still, in a form such as, when awakening from his slumber, he saw with wondering, admiring eyes, in the lovely woman that lay by his side on their bed of love and flowers. And now, because the change which conversion works on the soul is also inexpressibly great, it borrows a name from that mighty change; that, a resurrection of the body from the*

grave, this, a resurrection of the soul from sin. In this "we pass from death to life"—in this we are "created anew in Jesus Christ." "We rise with Him," says the Apostle, "to newness of life."

*The greatness of the change is set forth in the symbolical representation of it in the next chapter.* Seized by the hand of the Spirit, Ezekiel is born aloft, carried away through the air, and set down in a lonely valley among the hills of a distant land. This valley seems to have been, at some former period, the scene of a great battle. There hosts had sustained the charge of hosts, and crowns were perhaps staked and won. The peace of these solitudes had been rudely broken by the shrieks of the wounded, the wild shouts of the victors, the clash of arms, and the savage roar of battle. It was silent now. The tide that swept over it had left it strewn with wrecks; the dead had mouldered unburied where they fell; the skull rattled in the cloven helmet; the sword of the warrior lay rusting beside his skeleton, and the handle was still in the relaxed grasp of the bony fingers. On these unburied corpses the "birds of the air had summered," and "the wild beasts of the field had wintered." The rain had washed, and the sun had bleached them;—they were white and dry. In these grim and ghastly skeletons a doleful picture of death lay stretched out before the prophet; and while he surveyed the scene, there was neither sign nor sound of life, but, it may be, the croak of the raven, or the howl of the famished wolf, or the echo of his own solitary footfall. Such was the scene Ezekiel was contemplating when a voice made him start. It came from the skies, charged with this strange question, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

We stay not to relate all that happened and was done. It serves our purpose to say, that after the prophet had preached to the bones, he prayed to Him who—to dead bones, dead bodies, dead hearts, dead souls, dead families,

and dead churches—is “the Resurrection and the Life.” Ezekiel’s was the prayer of faith—and it had its answer. How encouraging to us, when on our knees, that answer! We feel as if Aaron and Hur sat at our side, and held up our weary arms. Ezekiel, after preaching, prayed; and there came from heaven a living and life-giving breath. It blows down the valley; and as it kisses the icy lips of the dead, and stirs their hair, and fans their faces, man after man springs to his feet, till the field which Ezekiel found covered with ghastly skeletons is crowded with a mighty army—all armed for battle and war—the marshalled host of God.

That was a great change, and not less great the work of grace in conversion. While the prophet is gazing with astonished eye on this martial array, where, amid trumpet echoes, spears are gleaming and plumes are dancing, as, bold in aspect and stout for war, the serried ranks march on, mark what the Lord said:—“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost.” Now, is not this the very judgment—the very sentence—which the sinner often pronounces on his own case when his eyes are first opened, and he sees himself lost and undone? What is the house of Israel here but a type of God’s chosen people? In Israel we see our state by nature; a state of death; a state in which we are “dead in trespasses and sins.” On this account Satan would have us yield to despair. He says that for such sinners there is no help—no hope. It is he who speaks in the complaint, “Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost.” Yes, it is he, the father of lies, the enemy of souls. Yield not even to a doubt, for here “he that doubteth is damned;” but mark God’s gracious answer to that unbelieving, dark, desponding complaint—“Thus saith the Lord God; beheld, O my people, I will open your

graves, and I will put my spirit within you; and ye shall live."

Hereafter, we will enter particularly into the nature of this great change; meanwhile, let me ask, Have you any experience of it? I neither ask when, nor where, nor how you felt its first impressions. On these subjects the experience of saints is very different. Some can tell the time of it—giving day and date, the hour, the providence, the place, the text, the preacher, and all the circumstances associated with their conversion. They can show the arrow which, shot from some bow drawn at a venture, pierced the joints of their armor, and quivered in their heart. They can show the pebble from the brook, that, slung, it may be, by a youthful hand, but directed of God, was buried in the forehead of their giant sin. They can show the word that penetrated their soul, and—in some truths of Scripture—the salve that healed the sore, the balm that stanchèd the blood, and the bandage that Christ's own kind hand wrapped on the bleeding wound. Able to trace the steps and whole progress of their conversion—its most minute and interesting details—they can say with David, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

It is not so, however, with all, or perhaps with most. Some, so to speak, are still-born; they were unconscious of their change; they did not know when or how it happened; for a while at least, they gave hardly a sign of life. With many the dawn of grace is, in more respects than one, like the dawn of day. We turn our face to the east, and our back to the setting stars, to note the very moment of the birth of morning; yet how hard it is to tell when and where the first faint, cold, steel-gray gleam appears! It is so with many in regard to their spiritual dawn,—with the breaking of an eternal day,—with their first emotions of desire and of alarm, as with that faint and feeble streak, which bright-

ened, and widened, and spread, till it blazed into a brilliant sky.

The great matter, about which to be anxious, is not the time, nor place, nor mode of the change, but the fact itself. Has this change taken place in you? Are you other than once you were? Rather than be what once you were, would you prefer not being at all? Would you prefer annihilation to your old corruption? Some, alas! change to the worse, giving themselves up to sins, which once they would have blushed to mention. Dead to all sense of shame, breaking loose from the innocence of their childhood, casting off the comely habits and pious practices of a paternal home, they plunge into excess of riot; and, borne on by the impetus they have acquired in the descent, like one running down hill who cannot stop although he would, when they reach the mouth of the pit they are borne over into perdition. They change, but, like "Seducers," they "wax worse and worse." The night grows darker and darker; the edge of conscience duller and duller; the process of petrification goes on in their heart till it acquires the hardness of stone; and wallowing in the mire of the lowest sensuality, they can make a boast of sins—sins, in regard to which, on the day when they left their father's roof, with his blessing on their head, and a mother's warm tears on their cheek, they would have said with feelings of indignant abhorrence—"Is thy servant a dog that he should do such a thing." What a melancholy change!

In blessed and beautiful contrast to a metamorphosis so sad, has the change in you taken an opposite direction? Can you say, I am not what once I was,—but better, godlier, holier! Happy are you! Happy, although afraid of presumption, and in the blushing modesty of a spiritual childhood, you can venture no further than one who was urged to say whether she had been converted? How modest, yet how satisfactory her reply! That, she answered, I

cannot—that I dare not say; but there is a change somewhere; either I am changed or the world is changed. If you can say so, it is well. Such an answer leaves no room for painful doubts. Our little child—watching with curious eye the apparent motion of objects—calls out in ecstasy, and bids us see how hedge and house are flying past our carriage. It is not these that move, nor is it the fixed and firm shore, with its trees and fields, and boats at anchor, and harbors and headlands, that is gliding by the cabin windows. That is an illusion of the eye. The motion is not in them but us. And if the world is growing less in your eye, it shows that you are retreating from it, rising above it, and ascending in the arms of grace to higher regions; and if the fashion of this world, to our eye, seems passing away, it is because we ourselves are passing—passing and pressing on in the way to heaven. Sin never changes. And if what was once lovely looks loathsome now—if what was once desired is detested now, if what was once sought we now shun and shrink from, it is not because sin is changed, but—blessed be God, and praise be to his grace—we are changed. Our eyes are opened; the scales have dropped from them; and the solution of the problem may be found in the blind man's answer—"Whereas I was blind, now I see."

## XXXVII.

### JESUS IN GETHSEMANE.

THOLUCK.

[FRIEDRICH AUGUST GOTTFRED THOLUCK, D. D., a Protestant theologian of Germany eminent for his evangelical works and eloquence, was born at Breslau, March 30th 1799. At the University of Berlin, where he completed his studies, he became engrossed in oriental literature, and confesses that he then esteemed Mohammedanism as nearly equal to Christianity. Neander did much to lead him to repentance and godliness of soul. In 1826 Dr. Tholuck was appointed professor of theology at Halle. This pious scholar had to endure many annoyances from rationalists in that theological faculty; but his calm faith has been rewarded by seeing the University become a consistent defender of Christian truth. Among his chief works are Commentaries on Romans, John and Hebrews, besides a "History of Rationalism," several parts of which have appeared. This Sermon is extracted from "Light from the Cross," a series on the passion and crucifixion of our Lord.]

*"Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."—Matt. xxvi. 36-46.*

BELoved in the Lord! Christmas and New-year's day are gone, and already I call upon you to "go up with me unto Jerusalem." We shall begin to-day our Good-Friday and Easter meditations. There are not many texts suitable for Christmas in the New Testament—but for Easter and for Good Friday there are many—so many, that it is impossible to exhaust them. We have, on a previous occasion, considered together the revelation of the human heart, as it is exhibited beneath the cross of Christ. And in this respect we have contemplated the heart of a Caiaphas, a Peter, a Thomas, and a Mary. We saw that the heart of man is only rightly revealed, when it is brought beneath the cross of Christ. It is true, the Christian congregation stands in need of moral sermons, and the preacher must descend, with the word of Christ in his hand, into the heart of man; but it is ever to him most rejoicing and refreshing, when he can look into the heart of Christ himself. The difference is, as when one, standing high in the mountain air, sees the spring rise out of the rocky mountain-side, and when, standing in the valley below, he beholds the copious stream, which, as it flows, spreads blessing and fertility all around. And may God grant that you may know in your deep experience, that a power goes forth from the word which testifies of Jesus, which makes men whole.

We shall view the heart of Jesus in Gethsemane, on the way to Golgotha, on the cross. Arise, and let us go this day in spirit to Gethsemane, and there behold the heart of our Saviour, in order that we may thereby learn how we may drink the cup of sorrow, when it shall be handed to us. Listen to the words of the Holy Scripture, as we find it in Matthew xxvi. 36-46: . . . . "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto



them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on, now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."

It may not have been half an hour before, that the Lord had uttered so solemnly the intercessory prayer. That was not like the prayer of a dying man, but rather as of one already glorified. And behold! around that sacred head, where but a little time before the light of glory shone, ah! what heavy clouds are gathering now! And yet this contrast, this change of light and darkness, is not unintelligible. The man who has not, in an unnatural way, repressed his feelings, will always find in those hours when he has some heavy trial to bear, that with whatever strength and decision he may have surrendered his own will to the will of God, and however clearly and distinctly his eye may perceive the real tints of approaching morn looking out from behind the night-clouds of sorrow, nevertheless, when he really enters into the cloud, a cold chill passes over his soul, and the convulsions of sorrow overpower him.

These will be moments, isolated indeed, but just on that

very account all the more severe: in every case suffering demands its due. When once this tribute has been rendered, it is enough. Thus how often, even after the sky has cleared up, do we see a single storm-cloud discharge its burden of thunder, lightning, and rain, and it is not till the last drop has fallen, and the last thunder has pealed, that serenity and calm are restored. This natural feeling of pain resembles the heat of summer and the cold of winter. There are cold summers and there are warm winters; but, at least for some days in the season, winter and summer must assert their right, and when they have once done so, it is enough.

The Saviour, too, has in this hour to pay his tribute to suffering. He will do it now when unseen by any but his disciples, that he may stand as a hero, when he must front his enemies. So may it be with us also, brethren, when the clouds of sorrow gather round us with all their terrors. Sorrow must have its due, but let it be paid in solitude, where no human eye, or at least none but a friendly one, is by to see. And then let the tears be quietly dried, when we go out again before men, that we cause not any offence to the Saviour's name.

"Like a flower whose root's unseen  
While the bloom appears,  
A smile beams on the Christian's life  
Which springs from hidden tears."

If we look into the Saviour's heart we shall see how a *yes* and a *no* are in conflict there: the *no* is human, the *yes* divine, and divine is the final decision. There is a human *no* in his heart as he realizes the hour when his own extremest suffering and his people's extremest guilt shall be brought awfully near to each other, nay, shall consume one another. "O Christ! the leaders of thy people, of the people of thy choice, will let their enmity against thee rise to the highest pitch of fury; ay, they will even lay hands

on thee, on thee, the centre and seal of all their promises." His heart cries No! "One of thy chosen will betray thee, another of them will deny, all of them will forsake thee." His heart cries No! "The guilt of the people and of mankind, which they have committed against thee, will weigh down thy heart and bow thy head, as if it were thy righteous doom." No! cries his heart with abhorrence. And indeed how could he then have answered otherwise? Had any other than this been his answer, could he then have loved mankind? Could he even have felt as a man feels, if, in view of this final catastrophe, he had not with all his might answered No! But perhaps you are thinking of him of world-renown, that greatest among the heathen, of Socrates—before whose death-struggle there lay no Gethsemane. Do you ask why *that* man, whom no fainting of spirit, no bloody sweat awaits, why, with such a calm smile of irony, *he* takes the cup of poison which his accusers, in the bitterness of their hate, present to him? He was great indeed, that greatest among the heathen that know not God; but in that cold smile on the very verge of that last, that most momentous step which man can take, I find not his greatness. It does indeed appear great that he did not tremble at the step he was taking into a land which to him was really a land unknown, which was disclosed to him only by the faint and feeble light of a presentiment of the heart. But had he not been greater still, if, even in him, who with all his wisdom was after all but a sinful child of man, the thought that he must soon stand before his Judge, had driven the blood quicker and hotter through his veins? Had he not been greater if a feeling of pitying sympathy for the guilt which his accusers were incurring, and for the blindness of his fellow-countrymen, had crimsoned his cheek and darkened his brow with sorrow? But the man who, in the days of his life, instead of pitying the sinners, has ironically laughed at the fools, such

a one will find something to smile at even in the deepest blindness of his people. O! the guilt of such is indeed not once to be measured with the guilt of the chosen people, that people who outraged him on whom all their promises hung, the holy Lamb of God; and yet, had there been in the heart of the Grecian sage but a spark of the holy sympathy of Jesus with sinful humanity, surely then a shade of sorrow must have passed over the smiling countenance! No! the Saviour could not have been so holy, so loving, and so great, and the guilt of his murderers could not have been so enormous as it was, had he thought on that hour without the sweat of agony, or had he gone to meet it with only that horror of death which all other children of men experience. But was it really sorrow on account of his own suffering only, that so afflicted and prostrated his soul? Were this the case, for whom, I ask you, had the tears which he shed on his last entrance into the city, when he cried, "O! that thou hadst known the things which belong to thy peace!" for whom would *those* tears have flowed? Can you doubt that he who then wept at the thought of the guilt his own people were so soon to incur, did now in Gethsemane feel the weight of this sorrow also? And when on the way to the cross the women of Jerusalem, in their sympathy, mourned for him, was it *his own* sorrow that engrossed his thoughts and filled his soul when he cried, "Weep not for me, weep rather for yourselves"? No, believe me. On every occasion when he is seen to shudder at the thought of his sufferings, it is because he is looking down into the abyss of his people's guilt, which these sufferings disclose. Thus it was too on that occasion, when, long before the wings of death began to flutter around him, he cried, "I am come to kindle a fire on the earth, but I have yet a baptism to be baptized with, and how do I long for it to be accomplished!" If then it cannot be denied that the horror with which the Redeemer contemplates death is at the same time

a horror at the thought of the guilt of humanity, then was his answer all the more on that account a real human *no*, when he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass!"

But along with this human *No*, there was also, from the very first, as we must believe, a Divine deep-seated *Yes*, in his heart. What I mean is, that from the beginning he knew to what end he was in the world, he acknowledged a Divine necessity which determined every step he took. "Must not Christ have suffered those things, that he might enter into his glory?" such is the question which he put to his disciples after the resurrection, as he opened up to them the Scriptures. From this we see that he had read with his enlightened eye his own history in the prophecies of the Old Testament from the first. You know the prophecies of Isaiah, that gospel-book of the Old Testament, and there you have learned to recognise the noble form of the true suffering servant of God. "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." How often in its musings must the spirit of our Lord have been absorbed in these verses! He did not require to ask, like that chamberlain of whom we read, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this?" In this crape-covered mirror the Saviour beheld the reflection of himself, and saw, long before they arrived, the days of his sorrow. They had ever, from the very first, been before his eyes. Does he not, already, at the first passover in Jerusalem, speak to Nicodemus of the Divine necessity, according to which he is to be raised upon the cross: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." And in how many sayings does this *must* recur? "Except a grain of corn fall into the earth and die, it

abideth alone." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many." Yea, he even prays in the passage before us, "If it be possible, let this cup pass;" a saying hard to understand, when we remember that it was but a few hours before that he had actually instituted the memorial of his death, when he appointed the sacrament of the Supper, that he had actually preached of the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Then the Divine necessity was full before his soul, and now he speaks of a possibility: "My Father! if it be *possible*, let this cup pass from me!"

And yet he to whom it has been assigned to experience to the uttermost the fire of trial, to whom his God has seen meet, at one period or other in the course of his life, to allot such tests as Abraham had, and such hours of affliction as Job knew, such a man will be able to understand this, which to others appears so mysterious. He will remember how, at such seasons, all that a man has known and experienced retires into the background, and not a single idea or emotion remains before the soul save that one, all-absorbing thought of pain, which in its insuperable greatness fills the eye of the soul, and shuts out all other thoughts from its memory and regard. One may know ever so certainly and distinctly that the cup, the bitter cup, must be drunk, and yet the soul will cry, "Lord, is it possible; Lord, is it possible?" And even if the decree of God was graven in stone before the soul: "Soul, thou *must*!" still the soul would cry, "Lord, is it possible!" It is indeed only those among you, who are no longer apprentices in the school of affliction, that know this kind of wrestling with God; but you also will be able to bear testimony to its truth. With us, indeed, it is only for a few hours, or perhaps half-hours, that the inner eye of the soul is so covered with tears, that it can indeed

see nothing else but those tears. With our Lord, however, this state did not last for hours, with him it is scarcely a minute in duration, for see how he gives expression in almost the same breath to both—both to the wish of his heart, bound with anguish, and to his consciousness of the divine, holy necessity of the case: “If it be possible, let this cup pass;” but in the same sentence he adds, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” These two points of view come separately before his mind, in his contemplation, only; in reality, they are ever united; and they are viewed apart only to be instantly united once more. And also in our Saviour’s view you see how clearly the two are brought together, when, the second time, returning from his disciples, he says, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” The cup is bitter, and, in view of its bitterness, purely human feeling can never do otherwise than refuse or be unwilling to drink it. But he lets a little drop fall into the cup, which is sufficient to make its contents sweet, and that drop is the short phrase, “God wills it.” When he comes back from his disciples the first time, that little drop is not as yet thoroughly mixed with the other contents of the cup; and the very point of conflict is to make the divine sweetness transfuse the human bitterness. And so when Christ says, “Rise, let us be going,” the bitterness has been swallowed up by the sweetness, and made wholly to disappear; and, as the sun, which in the morning a stormy cloud had covered, rises in majesty in the heavens, serene and unclouded, the Saviour advances from beneath the darkness of that cloud of woe, and accosts his enemies with the question, “Whom seek ye?”

The decision cost our Lord a struggle. O brethren, it does cost man something to find that the cup which God holds out to him, and which in itself is so bitter, is notwith

standing sweet, just because *it is the will of God*. The decision cost our Lord a struggle. O how bitter must that cup have been to him at the thought of which he could be so faint and disheartened! Can you estimate what a weight must have lain upon his heart when from his brow the sweat of agony fell in great drops of blood? But what most strikes the reader of this touching narrative is, the longing of the Saviour for human sympathy. He is in need of loving men to watch with him. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Here may we also, brethren, draw something for our hours of suffering. Yes, it is human to be unwilling to watch through the hot and parching hours of life without the solace of sympathy and love. Human too is it, not to withdraw one's self when the children of affliction invite us to weep through their nights of tears along with them. *Our* friends, too, will grow weary and sleepy when called on to watch with us through long nights of sorrow—for O! it is easier to rejoice with those that rejoice than it is to weep with those that weep. The friends of the Lord were overcome with sleep, although they were required to watch only one single hour with their Master! How bitter must the cup have been to him, for he is now so disheartened: he had fought this very fight already, long before the bitter reality, in his foreknowledge of the future. The conflict in Gethsemane had been fought through even in the wilderness of Jordan, in the days of his temptation. Was there not, then, already at the outset, the whole of the way of the cross stretching before the eye of his soul, that way which, according to God's appointment, he had to go; and already at the outset did he make his decision; although he might have chosen joy, he chose the cross. And when, at the feast at Jerusalem the first rays of the glory which was to follow from his sufferings shone around him, on the occasion when the Greeks desired to see him, as the thought



of the inexpressible joy which his sufferings were to bring to the whole human race came before him, then, along with the vision of his glory, the thought of what he must first endure seized his soul. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this cause came I unto this hour." You see, it is the same conflict: "Now is my soul troubled, shall I say, 'Save me from this hour?'—but for this cause came I unto this hour!" It is the same human No, the same divine Yes, and the same divine-human decision. Thus more than once did the Saviour fight this fight, more than once did he wring from himself this decision. It is written of him, "My meat is to do the will of my Father." Again, it is written of him that "he learned obedience by the things which he suffered." The will of God was indeed meat to him; but to find that meat so distasteful to his humanity to be pleasant, was no easy matter. Only by exercise, only by suffering, only in repeated fights, in repeated decisions, was it possible that the Son of God could learn to do this. And none of you, my brethren, who have not learned obedience to the will of God, and the joy of that obedience in the school of affliction, have ever learned it. The fact that you wonder at these fierce conflicts, at these repeated decisions of the Lord, may testify to you, either that you have not yet an idea, even the faintest, of the load that lay upon the holy soul of Jesus, because you are not yourselves holy enough; or, that you have not yet felt how great the lesson is which has been given you to learn; to be able in everything, even in what to the natural man is distasteful and unpleasant, to say, not in the spirit of a servant, but of a child, "Thy will be done!" "How sweet are thy words unto my taste."

Ah! most men do not understand even what sort of a

decision is required of them in their hours of suffering. There are some who, without ever imagining that every affliction is sent by God charged with the teaching of a moral lesson, regard their endurance of those afflictions in the light of a meritorious work. But do not err: it was not by the crown of thorns alone that Jesus became the Christ; it is not, it never can be so. Others there are who look upon themselves as heroes, when they can *forget* their sufferings. That is, to say the least, *unnatural*. Is it not unnatural in an old man to act as if he were young, or when a lame man would leap as if he were whole? Thus, too, it is unnatural to wish to ignore and deny a burden under which we lie, by the decree of God. Nay, more, it is ungodly; for why has thy God been pleased to smite thee with the rod, if thou art not to feel its smart; why has he poured out for thee the bitter draught, if thou art not to taste its bitterness? But thou wouldst escape from the school where God would teach thee, and because thou art ashamed of the bitter draught, thou wouldst drink it with blinded eyes. Thou fool! is not the cup there, and must it not be drunk whether thou drink it with thine eyes open or closed? But we are not to take blindly, but as seeing men, all that God holds out to us. And to take it with open eyes means, to acknowledge the end for which it is given. Now, it is given us in order that we may learn the art of tasting what is sweet in the will of God, even when that will involves what is in itself bitter. This is what we are intended to learn. To pour the little drop "God wills it" into the bitter cup, and to mingle that little drop with the bitter contents, until the taste of the whole is sweetened. At present the most of you suffer, only because you *must*, and therefore as servants; but you should suffer as children, who suffer because it is the will of their Father that they should, and who, because it is his will, make it also theirs. When one learns to view

sorrow in this light, what a multitude of moral lessons open up to him! Then one need not wait for extraordinary seasons of affliction. Each little daily sorrow, every misunderstanding we experience on the part of our fellow-men, every little disappointed hope, every cross, every care, if only viewed in this light, becomes a great lesson to every Christian soul: he must not bear it as a servant, he must bear it as a son! O ye who know not yet the school of affliction, and the lesson that is there taught, go, learn it at Gethsemane! Learn it in contemplating the conflict which the holy heart of Jesus knew there, and let the thought of him be your consolation and your strength when the cup is passed to you! There you may once and again have to bend the knee, before your breast is unburdened, and your brow again unclouded. The struggle may be so severe that in it the physical man may be quite shaken and shattered, and you may have to fight every inch of the way. And if one decision be not sufficient, another and another must be forced from you. O! in all these experiences your Saviour has gone before you, for he, even he had to learn obedience by the things which he suffered. Remember that with every new conflict this obedience becomes more and more our own, becomes more and more the law of our new life. Hence it is that the conflict recurs so often. If even with the Saviour the struggle had to be fought, and the decision to be made repeatedly over again, think what a very difficult task it must be to sweeten the bitter cup with the consideration that it is God who sends it. And even when the fight is over, and the victory won, above the shout of triumph may still be heard the groan of suffering nature. Do you not hear after the decision of Gethsemane, and before the final "It is finished," the words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" May the soul-conflict of our Saviour in Gethsemane teach us that it is one of the highest works of

our Christian life at all times so to permeate and transfuse the human *no* with the divine *yes*, that the final decision shall be divine!

“The Christian lives, but lives to fight,  
He struggles on his way.  
Christ's people are his soldiers too,  
Christ leads them by his Spirit through,  
From strife to victory.

’Tis not the skirmish of an hour;  
Sin yields not at a blow:  
For pride of heart is ill to slay,  
And what seemed overcome to-day  
Will be to-morrow's foe.”

O Lord! Thou who in all points didst become like unto us, yet without sin. O Lord! Thou who in the days of thy flesh didst offer strong crying and tears, in order that thy Heavenly Father's will might be found sweet unto thee, grant unto us thy Spirit, that we may understand the lesson that is daily, in every sorrow, given us to learn. Grant us thy Spirit, that we may fight a good fight, and may never by succumbing enfeeble our spirit. O Lord! how beautiful is the crown which awaits us at the goal, do thou hold it ever before our soul! Amen.

## XXXVIII.

### WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

THOMSON.

[At Wheeling, Virginia, March 22d 1870, died EDWARD THOMSON, D. D., LL.D., a Christian educator, editor, and bishop, of great talents and zeal—in the memorial words of Bishop Simpson: “the gifted, the eloquent, the polished writer, the pure Christian man.” He was born at Portsea, a suburb of Portsmouth, England, in October 1810, and in his ninth year settled with his father’s family in Wayne county, Ohio. He received a classical and medical education, and practised as a physician for several years. From skepticism he was converted in his twenty-second year, and at once became a Methodist exhorter. Principal of the Norwalk Seminary in 1838, and for six years editor of the “Ladies’ Repository,” Cincinnati, he was appointed president of the Ohio Wesleyan University in 1845. Fifteen years later he was elected editor of the official church organ—the “Christian Advocate and Journal;” and in 1864 he was chosen Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. An official visit to the missions in India, China, Turkey, Germany, and Switzerland, gave birth to two thoughtful volumes on “Our Oriental Missions.” His “Educational Essays” are the ripe experiences of a quarter-century’s labors as a teacher of youth. Equable in temperament, modest, capable of much literary toil, he was “one of the greatest masters of classic English” in his denomination, gifted with an “eloquence with too much of heaven in it to be set forth in any terms but its own.” The following Sermon is a verbatim but unrevised report.]

“*What think ye of Christ?*”—Matt. xxii. 42.

“WHAT think ye of Christ?” is a question which we may all very profitably put to ourselves. In order to form correct ideas of the Saviour, we must not limit ourselves to the Evangelists. Indeed, the Evangelists had but an imperfect conception of Christ—of his motives, of his purpose, and of his character. The writers of the Epistles had a far better idea, coming after the Evangelists, of the true nature and

character of the Messiah. But to do justice to him, we must look at him in other aspects. We must look at him through the prophecies, and down upon him through the ages. We call your attention, first, to the Christ of prophecy; secondly, to the Christ of the Evangelists; and thirdly, to the Christ of history.

I. First, then, Christ in prophecy. He is to be the Saviour of the world. When our first parents fell, it seems that they must have been cut off, and with them the human race, had not God foreseen and forecast the necessity of a Saviour. When he pronounced upon them the mitigated sentence of the law and placed them in a new probation, he intimated to them a coming Deliverer. This promise was contained in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Now, however obscure this promise may seem to us, it was doubtless clear to them, encouraging their hopes and leading them to offer sacrifices; for sacrifices were certainly offered by Abel, and probably by Adam. When we consider the history of the sacrifice of Abel and the acceptance of it—I mean in contradistinction to the rejection of that of Cain—it seems that they had some idea of the mode in which the deliverance was to be achieved. As the human race diverged from the primitive seed, they must have borne with them this tradition of a promised Deliverer; because, wherever we find the human family, in all ages and in all nations, we find them offering sacrifices. Now, as there is no natural connection between the forgiveness of sin and the offering of sacrifices, it seems hardly possible to account for this uniform law without referring it to the primitive tradition.

I remark, in the next place, that the Christ of prophecy is to be of a virgin born. "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son"—a very remarkable statement. When, before or since Messiah, has any man been born of a virgin? Again, he is to be the incarnate God. "A virgin shall conceive and bear

a son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel, which means God with us." Again: "Unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given, and his name shall be Wonderful, Counsellor, the Everlasting Father, the Mighty God, as well as the Prince of Peace." Again, the Christ of prophecy is to come from Abraham through the line of Jacob and through the family of David, to each of whom the promise is repeated and enlarged. You recollect the circumstances under which the promise was repeated to Abraham. He was dwelling in Beersheba: the Lord directed him to take his son, his only son, his well-beloved son Isaac, and convey him to the land of Moriah, and offer him up in sacrifice upon an eminence which should be designated. The patriarch hesitated not nor delayed. The next morning he took the beasts of burden, two servants, and the necessities for the journey, and directed his way, with his son Isaac, to the appointed place. Three days he journeyed with that little son. O what a journey that was! meditating, as he could not avoid it, upon the transaction about to take place. He arrives at the mount, and says to his servants: "Tarry ye here while I and my son go up the mount to worship." And as they were travelling up the mount, probably Calvary, the son said to the father: "Father, here is the wood, and there is the fire, but where is the lamb?" O what a question for a father's heart! Arriving at the spot, the altar was built, and the wood was laid upon it, and then the lamb, the precious lamb, was bound and laid upon the wood, and then the knife was drawn to pierce that precious victim. But it was enough. The Lord directed Abraham to stay his hand, and, looking round, he saw a ram caught in the thicket, which he substituted for his son.

This can hardly be understood but as symbolic of what afterward occurred on that mountain, in all probability the very same summit where God gave up his Son, his only Son, his well-beloved Son, as a sacrifice for the human race. Well,

in immediate connection with this transaction, God says: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"—a promise which we cannot understand, unless it refers to Christ, and which the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, distinctly declares was uttered of the Messiah. Then to Jacob the promise is renewed. You recollect, as the patriarch is dying, he predicted the future of the condition of the tribes that shall come of his sons. When he comes to Judah, among other things, he says: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the nations be." The Shiloh to whom the gathering of the nations shall be must mean Messiah. I may be asked, however, if Judah was not taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, if it was not overthrown by Ptolemy, if it was not taken by Pompey, and if it was not reduced to a Roman province before the coming of the Messiah? I answer, notwithstanding all these calamities, the tribe of Judah preserved its tribeship and its innocence until the coming of Shiloh. Then to-day the promise is renewed in various forms. Take, for example, that strange declaration: "Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; thou wilt not leave my soul in hell"—that is Hades—a clear prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord.

Again, the Christ of prophecy is to be born in a particular place. Thus in Micah, 5th chapter: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Of whom but the Messiah can this pre-existence from eternity be predicated? And then Messiah, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, is to be born at a particular place, clearly designated—Bethlehem of Judah.

Again, this Christ of prophecy is to be born at a particu-



lar time; the time is designated in various ways. Take that simple prediction of Daniel, in the 9th chapter at the 24th verse: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish" (or restrain, as the margin has it) "the transgression"—that is, by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit—"and make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity"—by his death upon the cross—"to bring in everlasting righteousness"—that is, to bring in everlasting redemption, which has been the hope of the ages—"to seal up the vision and prophecy"—that is, to close up the Scripture—"and to anoint the most Holy"—that is, to make Christ a priest. Seventy weeks, each day answering to a year, making four hundred and ninety years, and the time is the time when the decree of Artaxerxes was issued for the rebuilding of the temple and of the city. This period of four hundred and ninety years is divided into three periods, one of seven weeks of forty-nine years, during which the temple is to be rebuilt, and the city walls restored, and the Jewish people rehabilitated and reconstructed; then the period of sixty-two weeks until the coming of the Messiah; then the period of one week of seven years, during which the ministry of the Baptist, the ministry of the Son of Man, and the sacrifice of the cross are to take place, and afterward the destruction of Jerusalem. Now, it seems to me that nothing can be more distinct—not only the place, but the particular time at which the Messiah should come.

I remark, in the next place, that he is to fulfil the three-fold functions of prophet, priest, and king. Moses, who gave the first revelation, clearly explains to us that after him should come a Prophet to complete the revelation. At one particular place, you recollect, he especially cautions the people against looking for any other revelation than that which he has given until the coming of that Prophet. He knew that they would go among the idolatrous nations, and that there they would find witches, wizards, necromancers,

and, perhaps, table-tippers and spiritualists: Against them all he utters his caution—that they are not to look into the future by these means, but to wait for the coming of the Prophet whom the Lord should raise up unto them of their people and whom they should hear. Then he is to be a Priest—and a Priest of a peculiar kind; a Priest whose altar is to be his own cross, whose victim is to be his own body. And the Jews must have had some idea of such a sacrifice as Christ offered. I do not see how they could have avoided it, standing in the midst of their tabernacle and temple. Everything addressed to the senses, and everything that was addressed to the imagination, seemed to point to just such a sacrifice as that of the cross. Why did they take living animals who had not committed sin, and offer them upon their bloody altars? And mark, it is not the lion or the tiger or the wolf that they slew upon those altars, but it was the dove, who was upon the housetop, and the emblem of innocence; it was the ox that bowed to the yoke and bore burdens, and served man; it was the lamb, the emblem of purity, that bleated in the flock, that played with the children, that lay in the bosom, that was slain and placed upon the altar. Surely pointing them to some sinless, innocent victim, that should be offered at some time a sacrifice for sin, and of which all these sacrifices were the types, keeping the mind ever acquainted with that coming sacrifice. The prophet Isaiah gives a description of this sacrifice in the 53d chapter—a remarkable chapter. [The Bishop here recited from memory the whole of the chapter.] It gives a particular and very specific description of the manner in which our Saviour came, the manner in which he was received, the offering which he made for mankind, and the final triumph of his reign.

Once more, he is to be a King as well as Priest. In visions of the night, Daniel saw “One like unto the Son of Man” coming in the clouds of heaven, and he came to the Ancient

of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom. For what purpose? That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him, and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not end.

Now, concerning these prophecies, a few general remarks before I pass. First, that they occur in a series of predictions extending from the first hour of time to the last, containing numerous events which can be shown to have been fulfilled, and none can be shown to have been falsified. Secondly, that they contain numerous particulars concerning the Son of Man, all of which meet in Jesus of Nazareth, and can meet in no other man. Can it be pretended that in any other man they met prior to the destruction of Jerusalem? It is not possible that they should meet in any other man since. Thirdly, that one of these revelations is sufficient for conviction—the very chapter which I have quoted—the 53d of Isaiah. It is said that a celebrated infidel of the last age was convinced of the incorrectness of his position, and was led to accept the Christian faith, simply from a meditation upon that prophecy. It comes, mark, from the hands of our enemies, our bitterest enemies, the Jews; they furnish us with the prophecy of Isaiah, and have had it in their archives more than six hundred years before the coming of the Messiah. And then, as to the fulfillment, how particular! so that, if you only change the tenses, the prophecy answers for history itself.

But I may be asked, how was it that this prophecy, so clear, did not convert the Jews themselves? Well, I answer, human nature is depraved.

“A man convinced against his will  
Is of the same opinion still.”

They had misinterpreted the prophecies before the coming of the Messiah, understanding the kingship of Christ, and

the predictions concerning his kingship literally, and predictions concerning his priesthood metaphorically, and had prepared themselves to receive as their Messiah a king and a conqueror; and hence were averse to the Messiah coming as he did. Therefore, they put a false interpretation upon a prophecy after his coming, which they did not put upon it before. They interpreted it of the nation, and not of the Son of Man—an interpretation of which we can judge as well as they. Let us apply a test or two to it. Suppose it was the nation that the prophet described, and grant that it suffered. The question arises, for whom did it suffer? For whose transgressions was it bruised? The chastisement of whose peace was laid upon it? For whose iniquities was it bruised, and who were healed by its stripes? And when did the nation receive the sentence to be buried as a malefactor? And when did it go into the sepulchre of the rich man? The Ethiopian eunuch of Candace, who had been down to Jerusalem shortly after the crucifixion of the Messiah, was returning to his home with the prophecy of Isaiah before him, and undoubtedly, trying to see if the interpretation which the Jews put upon it at Jerusalem could be made to apply. He became confused and confounded utterly as he read. Philip was directed to join himself to his chariot. As he came up, he was reading the verse, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Philip asked him if he understood what he read. Mark his answer: "How can I unless some man should guide me?" admitting his perfect confusion. Then the next sentence shows how the confusion occurred. He had been trying to apply the interpretation of the Jews. He says: "Of whom does the prophet speak, of himself, or some other man?" He saw it could not apply to the nation, and then he was ripe for conversion. Philip preached unto him Jesus, with such power that he was ready to be baptized in the first stream they came to.

Now, lastly, concerning these prophecies, they are so remarkably and so accurately fulfilled in the Messiah, that I think the most able English infidel, Bolingbroke, could not very well get through with his argument without undertaking to account for the fulfilment of these prophecies by supposing that Christ actually planned, prearranged, and brought upon himself his own sufferings and death, for the purpose of giving the disciples, after his death, the benefit of believing the old prophecies. To say nothing of the absurdity of a man planning his own sufferings and his own death, for the sake of imposing upon his disciples, and those who would come after them—to say nothing of that, how inadequate is the theory! for it was necessary, not only that Christ should secure his own sufferings and his own death, but to come through a particular line, through a particular family, at a particular time, and be born at a particular place, which would be very difficult for any man to prearrange.

II. I proceed to notice briefly the Christ of the Evangelists. He is divinely announced. At the conception, the angel of the Lord announces him to his virgin mother; shortly after, the angel of the Lord announces him to his reputed father; at his birth, the angel of the Lord announces him to the shepherds of Bethlehem, as they tend their flocks, as the company of the heavenly host sing that choral song, "On earth peace, good-will to men, and glory to God in the highest!" At his presentation in the temple, he is announced by the prophet Simeon, to whom God had promised that he should not depart this life before he had seen the Lord Christ. He took the infant in his arms, exclaiming: "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He is announced to the wise men by a miraculous star, which guided them to Jerusalem, with the inquiry: "Where is he who is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him?" That

same star guided them to Bethlehem, where, in the manger, they recognised the incarnate God, and offered to him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—appropriate gifts at once for a King, a Priest, and a Sufferer.

He is divinely protected. When Herod sent forth to slay the infants of Bethlehem, Jesus was safe in Egypt, having been conveyed there by his father, through a divine intimation of the danger that awaited him. When the people of his own race conveyed him to the top of a precipice, with a view to hurl him over and destroy him, he marvellously and miraculously disappeared—safe—from the midst of them. When the officers of the Sanhedrim went to arrest him, they returned without him, and they gave no other reason than this: "Never man spake like this man."

He is divinely educated. He goes not to Rome, or to Athens, or to Corinth, or to Egypt, for the purpose of obtaining divine knowledge. He does not even enjoy the advantages of an education in Jerusalem. He sits at the feet of no philosopher or Rabbi, he graduates at no college, he goes to no school; but in the obscure region of Galilee, and in the obscure village of Nazareth, he is divinely filled with wisdom; so that at his twelfth year he astonishes the doctors of the temple, as well by the questions that he puts as by the answers that he returns. When he comes forth in the fullness of knowledge—a knowledge of nature and a knowledge of man—his words distil as the dew, as no man's words ever did. His parables, his prayers, his discourses stand sublime over all that ever has been uttered by mortal man. His works, as well as his words, indicate his divine wisdom and his spirit above all.

He is divinely empowered, so that all nature seems obedient to his will. He speaks to the winds, and they are still; he speaks to the sea, and there is a calm; he speaks to the fig-tree, and it withers, not under the curse of man, but under the blast of the breath of Christ; he speaks to the blind eye,

and it sees; to the deaf ear, and it unstops; to the dumb tongue, and it speaks; to the lame foot, and it walks; to the palsied arm, and it comes forth. He speaks to the mind, and it is calm; to the heart, and it is quieted; to the penitent, and his sins are forgiven. He speaks to the leper, and he is cleansed; he speaks to the devils, and they quake; he speaks, and his words pierce the dull-toned ear of death, and the spirit returns from its mansion of rest, the clay tenement is reanimated, the heart beats anew, the flush of health comes to the cheek, and Lazarus, bound hand and foot in his grave-clothes, stands up at the sepulchre.

He suffers preternaturally in his temptation. Where and when was there ever a man since the days of Adam until Christ, or afterward, brought face to face with the great adversary of souls, and that, too, after a fast that had brought down the body and debilitated the mind? So severe was this temptation, that angels came to minister to him, not because they were necessary, but because angelic ministry needed that hour of exhaustion. So, too, in the garden of Gethsemane, were not the sufferings supernatural? When did man ever suffer like Christ, so that the agonized mind pressed the blood out of the body, to stand in great drops on the surface? There, too, an angel appears, to strengthen the enfeebled body and mind, pressed down under the weight which man could not bear. So, too, upon the cross, it was not the simple death. Martyrs, many of them, even in the heathen world, have died in triumph and in peace. Oh! how many have sung in the flames! And yet Christ did not go out of the world in that way; but on that cross on which he dies, he cried out: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" That sinless soul, looking out all round, saw nothing but infinite darkness—and in the depths of his agony he exclaimed: "My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" We cannot explain that agony but by reference to the words of Isaiah: "When thou shalt make his *soul*" (not

his body) "an offering for sin because he delivered up his *soul* unto death."

III. Now, lastly, a few words on the Christ of history. What I mean by this is, Christ manifested in the world since this sacrifice. The Church is the body of Christ. Christ is the animating spirit of the Church. Just so long, then, and so far as the Church manifests Christ's spirit, and believes Christ's doctrines, and practises Christ's precepts, so long and so far is it a manifestation of Christ to the world. Now, concerning this Church, mark, if you please, that it was miraculously and divinely founded. The history recites, as you all know, that Christ rose from the dead; that after his resurrection, by the space of forty days, he appeared in various forms and at different times to his disciples; that he commissioned them to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature, and that he would be with them always to the end; that he directed them to begin at Jerusalem, and instructed them to wait there until they were endued with power from on high; that, in obedience to his command, they so waited until the day of Pentecost was fully come, when the promise made by the Saviour was fulfilled by the coming of the Spirit in the form of a mighty rushing wind, which filled the house where they were sitting, and cloven tongues, as of fire, sat upon each one of them, and they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance, so that the dwellers at Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of all other parts of the earth, gathered on that occasion, heard them speak, each in his own language, the wonderful things of God. And Peter explained how this came so satisfactorily that three thousand of them were baptized. And thus miraculously and divinely was the Christian Church founded at Jerusalem.

Now, say, if you please, that all this is mythical, then you have a stream, and a mighty one, too, without a foun-



tain; a mountain, and a mighty one, too, without any base; a moral miracle greater than a physical miracle.

It is more particularly to be observed that they founded this Church without eloquence, without learning, without wealth, without rank, without office, civil, or military, or ecclesiastic; that they founded it in Jerusalem, where Christ was crucified. They founded it at a time when those were alive who had arrested, tried, condemned, and executed him. They founded it—how? Not by ignoring the cross upon which the Victim died, but taking that cross as the very symbol, the emblem of their faith—no longer a symbol of death, but an emblem of resurrection, making the very corner-stone of their Church the allegation that Christ rose from the dead. The fact could be contradicted if it was not true, and it could be disproved at that time and in that place.

Then, too, the Church miraculously spread, for it did not rest in Jerusalem, but went outward through Galilee, Samaria, and Damascus, that great city in Syria; not only there, but into Arabia, into Egypt, and all along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, northward through Asia Minor, planting itself in the great cities, in Athens and Greece, crossing the Mediterranean, in Sicily, in Italy, even in Rome, and planted itself in Norway; but soon it conquered the Roman Empire, overthrew all its idols, and silenced its priests, upset all its pagan altars everywhere and all its pagan temples, and made the cross the flag of the empire, and the symbol of religion of the nation and the empire. Now, how was this done? Other religions have cut their way by the sword; this, without any sword, simply by persuasion. Other religions had found favor by catering to the human passions; this cut athwart all the passions and the interests of men. Other religions have gained and maintained an empire by crushing the human mind; this by enlightening, enfranchising, and elevating humanity, instead of repressing it.

The Church, too, was divinely preserved from the first age. O what a wonderful preservation! It went not over an easy path, but an exceedingly difficult one. Sometimes it was in the fire; but, like the three Hebrew children, it endured the fire, and had the form of the fourth in the midst. Sometimes it was cast to the wild beasts; but, like Daniel in the den, it was not destroyed. Sometimes, indeed, the fire did burn it; sometimes the wild beast did tear it; but though the blood flowed in torrents from the sanctuary, the Church was not extinguished, for it grew and grew, as though the seed of the Church was derived from the blood of the Saints. Then came a worse period, perhaps, when the Church became the object of particular care by the State, and every form of prosperity was showered upon her; when hypocrites came upon her by hundreds, if not by thousands. This was a period of great danger and of great trial—worse than the fires of persecution—and yet God preserved her in the midst of them. Then came on the dark ages, when the Church got into a worse condition—when the State had the Church under her control, regulating and patronizing it. Yet in the dark ages God always had his faithful seed; and he who, long before Luther, uttered the doctrine of justification by faith, incurred the condemnation of the Pope and the anathemas of the priests. Then came the period of another form of trial, as bad as the former—the contentions of the reformers; and yet, in the midst of those fires of contention, God preserved his Church. Now we have the period of skepticism, commencing ages ago, but still continuing—a period of fierce trial; but how, from every conflict with the enemy, the Church rises triumphantly, I need not tell you. God preserves his Church. It is not merely in the Church that Christ is manifested, but in the consciousness of Christians: I mean the experience of the Saints. Now, when a man becomes convinced of sin and groans for redemption, it is because Christ is preached. You know very well, and I

know, and God knows, that if you would awaken in any man's breast conviction for sin; if you would have conversion from sin, and if you would have sanctification, you must preach Christ crucified; and if you do that, you can hardly ever fail of producing conviction, conversion, and sanctification. Now, are not these realities produced by the Son of Man? When a man comes forward trembling and weeping to the altar, and you see the very agony of his soul stamping itself on his body, is there no reality in it? When he rises converted, and you see the radiance of his soul beaming out everywhere, is there no reality in it? When he uses the language of wrestling Jacob,

"Come, O thou traveller unknown!  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see;  
My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with thee.  
With thee all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day,"

is there no reality in that? And when a man dies, and you gather your friends around to see him die, and they place their ears to his lips and ask him how he feels, and he tells you, as I have been told, with dying lips,

"Jesus protects—my fears begone—  
What can the Rock of Ages move?  
Safe in thy arms I lay me down—  
Thy everlasting arms of love,"

is there no reality—is there no Christ there? Is your Christ not only the experience of Christendom? Is he not in your heart—Christ formed within you, the hope of glory? You tell me sometimes that the religion of Christ has not accomplished much. I have heard it said that in this city it had not accomplished much, where so many thousands blow the trumpet of the Gospel. We cannot expect it to accomplish everything. It does not design to break down the mental

organization which God has set up in the soul. A man may resist it if he will, and take the consequences; it is not designed to force him.

I took up the paper the other day, and as I did it, I did not know what was in it. I said to myself: "Now, what kind of an idea would a heathen form of our civilization if he were to take up this paper, read it, and get his conception from it?" My heart sunk within me as I read about a runaway match, a bad case of adultery, and then came an assault and battery case. I turned the paper over, and saw the Governor's Message, and just read the headings of it. That was enough. "Common Schools," that is a glorious idea; "Universities, Asylums for the Deaf and Dumb, for the Insane and the Idiotic; Hospitals for the Disabled Soldiers." Oh! these, Christianity, are thy triumphs. Here is Christ in history yet, just as he was on earth, opening the blind eye, unstopping the deaf ear, curing the sick, healing the leper, and giving peace to the troubled heart. Yes, Christ is in the midst of the Church, in the heart of the Christian, and in the civilization which has been established on the principles of the Gospel. Now, my friends, just as sure as Christ exists and his religion is true, that religion must be universal; and just as certain as you are a Christian, it is your duty to contribute to the extension of it to the ends of the earth. It is not merely optional with us whether we give to diffuse this religion or not; we must do it or die. Christ hath laid the command upon us; we cannot escape it. Oh! let us not try to escape it, but let us rejoice that Christ has called us to this ministry, to be the almoners of his divine beneficence. Let us joyfully consecrate whatsoever of time, of talent, of property, of influence we possess, so that the universal reign of Christ may be brought about.

## XXXIX.

### THE CRUCIFIXION.

KRUMMACHER.

[FRIEDRICH WILHELM KRUMMACHER, late royal court preacher to the king of Prussia, was born at Meurs, Lower Rhine, Germany, January 28th 1796, and died December 10th 1868. His father was a distinguished theologian, and author of the famous "Parables," in verse. Friedrich was educated at Halle and Jena. After a three years' pastorate over a German Reformed congregation in New York city, he settled in Berlin in 1847. To the defence of evangelical Lutheran doctrines, he consecrated his great gifts of intellect and imagination. In eloquence of speech and pen, he was unsurpassed by his contemporaries. The closing words of his last Sermon are said to have epitomized his religious character: "Our conversation is in heaven." Among his widely known works are: "Elijah the Tishbite;" "David, the King of Israel;" "The Suffering Saviour," meditations on the last days of Christ. No more absorbing works exist in Christian literature. From the last named, this Sermon is taken.]

*"And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, A place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him."—Matt. xxvii. 33-5.*

"THE Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." Let these words of the prophet Habakkuk be the language of our hearts on entering into the Most Holy Place of the Gospel history.

The most solemn of all days in Israel, was, as we well know, the great day of atonement, the only day in the year on which the high priest entered into the most holy place in the temple. Before he approached that mysterious sanctuary, the law enjoined that he should divest himself of his costly garments, and clothe himself from head to foot in a plain white linen dress. He then took the vessel with the

sacrificial blood in his hand, and, thrilling with sacred awe, drew back the vail, in order, humbly and devoutly, to approach the throne of grace, and sprinkle it with the atoning blood. He remained no longer in the sacred place than sufficed to perform his priestly office. He then came out again to the people, and in Jehovah's name, announced grace and forgiveness to every penitent soul.

We shall now see this symbolical and highly significant act realized in its full and actual accomplishment. The immaculate Jesus of whom the whole Old Testament priesthood, according to the divine intention, was only a typical shadow, conceals himself behind the thick veil of an increasing humiliation and agony; that, bearing in his hands his own blood, he may mediate for us with God his Father. Removed from the sphere of reason's vision, and only cognisable by the exercise of faith, he realizes and accomplishes all that Moses included in the figurative service of the tabernacle. The precise manner in which this was accomplished, we shall never entirely fathom with our intellectual powers; but it is certain that he then finally procured our eternal redemption.

My readers, how shall we best prepare ourselves for the contemplation of this most solemn and sacred event? At least we must endeavor to do so by holy recollection of thought, devout meditation, a believing and blissful consideration of the work of redemption, and by heartfelt and grateful adoration before the throne of God.

May we be enabled thus to draw near by the help of his grace and mercy!

Once more we return to the road to the cross, and, in spirit, mingle with the crowd proceeding to the place of execution. They are just passing the rocky sepulchres of the kings of Israel. The ancient monarchs sleep in their cells, but a dawning resurrection gleams upon their withered remains when the Prince of Life passes by. The procession

then enters the horrible vale of Gehenna, which once reeked with the blood of the sacrifices to Moloch. But there is another still more dreadful Gehenna; and who among us would have escaped it, had not the Lamb of God submitted to the sufferings which we now see him enduring?

We are arrived at the foot of the awful hill; but before ascending it, let us cast a look on the crowd behind us, and see if, amid all the hatred and rancor that rages there like an infernal flame, we can discover any traces of sympathy and heartfelt veneration for the divine sufferer. And lo! an estimable little group meets our eye, like a benignant constellation in the darkness of the night. O we know them already, these deeply-distressed mourners! We first perceive the pious Salome, the blessed mother of the two "sons of thunder." She desires to set her children an example of faithfulness unto death, and we know that both James and John, the former of whom was the first martyr for the new kingdom of peace, afterward showed themselves perfectly worthy of such a mother. Near Salome walks Mary, the near relative of the blessed Virgin. She had also the great privilege of seeing her two sons, James the Less and Josès, received into the immediate fellowship of the great Master. But alas! when the sword came upon the Shepherd, they were also scattered with the rest of the flock; while it seemed to their excellent mother a paramount duty to appear, instead of her children, and by her own fidelity, to cover their flight. And lo! yonder walks Mary Magdalene, sobbing aloud, who had experienced, above others, the delivering power of him who came to destroy the works of the devil. O how she appears dissolved in grief and sorrow! She has only one wish more, and that is, to be able to die with him, without whom the earth seems to her only a gloomy grave, a den of murderers.

But who is she with tottering step, leaning on the disciple whom Jesus loved, dejected more than all the rest, who

covers her grief-worn face? It is the sorely-tried mother of our Lord, in whom Simeon's prophecy is now fulfilled, "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also." But she had scarcely the smallest presentiment that it would be accomplished in such a manner. Truly, what she feels, no heart on earth ever experienced. But look up, Mary! Cast thyself, with all thy grief, into the arms of the Eternal Father. Dost thou see thy son going to be crucified? He also sees his. He who is crowned with thorns is his Son as well as thine. O look at the dear disciple, who though inconsolable himself, tries to support the deeply-grieved mother of his Lord. What a scene! But how gratifying is it to perceive, that love for the Man of Sorrows has not wholly become extinct upon earth! Nor shall it ever expire. Be not concerned on that account. In that mourning group you see only the first divinely-quicken'd germs of the future kingdom of the Divine Sufferer. From a few, a multitude that no man can number will ere long proceed.

After this cursory retrospect of the Saviour's attendants, let us again put ourselves in motion with the crowd. Only a few steps upward, and we reach the end of the dreadful pilgrimage. Where are we now? We are standing on the summit of Mount Calvary—Golgotha—horrifying name—the appellation of the most momentous and awful spot upon the whole earth. Behold a naked and barren eminence, enriched only by the blood of criminals, and covered with the bones of executed rebels, incendiaries, poisoners, and other offscourings of the human race. An accursed spot, where love never rules, but where naked justice alone sits enthroned, with scales and sword, and from which every passer-by turns with abhorrence, a nocturnal rendezvous of jackals and hyenas. Only think, this place so full of horrors, becomes transformed into "the hill from whence cometh our help," and whose mysteries many kings and prophets have desired to see, and did not see them. Yes, upon this awful hill our



roses shall blossom, and our springs of peace and salvation burst forth. The pillar of our refuge towers upon this height. The Bethany of our repose and eternal refreshment here displays itself to our view. Truly the ancients were in so far correct in their assertion, that Mount Calvary formed the centre of the whole earth; for it is the meeting-place where the redeemed, though separated in body by land and sea, daily assemble in spirit, and greet each other with the kiss of love. Not less correct were they in the legend that Father Adam was buried beneath Mount Calvary—this hill being really Adam's grave, when by the latter we understand the fallen sinful man, whom we all carry about in us, and who was crucified with Christ on Golgotha. It is strange that to this day the learned dispute the position of this hill, and that there is scarcely a prospect of ascertaining the place with certainty. But it was the divine intention that the material mount should be exalted into the region of that which is spiritual; and such is actually the case. It finds its abiding-place in the believing view of the world.

On that awful mount ends the earthly career of the Lord of Glory. Behold him, then, the only green, sound, and fruitful tree upon earth, and at the root of this tree the axe is laid. What a testimony against the world, and what an annihilating contradiction to everything that bears the name of God and Divine Providence, if the latter did not find its solution in the mystery of the representative atonement! Behold him, then, covered with wounds and ignominy, and scarcely distinguishable from the malefactors among whom he is reckoned. But have patience. In a few years, Jerusalem, that rejected him, glorifies him in the form of a smoking heap of ruins, as the beloved Son of the Most High, whom no one can assail with impunity; and surrounded by the lights of the sanctuary, living monuments arise, in three quarters of the globe, bearing the inscription,

"To Christ, the Redeemer of the world." But before these things take place, a horrible catastrophe must occur. The life of the world only springs forth from the death of the Just One. The hour of his baptism with blood has arrived. Collect your thoughts, my readers, while you witness it.

Alas! alas! what is it that now takes place on that bloody hill? O heart of stone in our breasts, why dost thou not break? Why, thou cold and obdurate rock, dost thou not dissolve in tears of blood? Four barbarous men, inured to the most dreadful of all employments, approach the Holy One of Israel, and offer him, first of all, a stupefying potion, composed of wine and myrrh, as usual at executions. The Lord disdains the draught, because he desires to submit to the will of his Heavenly Father with full consciousness, and to drink the last drop of the accursed cup. The executioners then take the Lamb of God between them, and begin their horrid occupation by tearing, with rude hands, the clothes from off his body. There he stands, whose garment once was the light, and the stars of heaven the fringe of his robe, covered only with the crimson of his blood, and divested of all that adorned him, not only before men, but also in his character as Surety, before God—reminding us of Adam in paradise, only that instead of hiding himself behind the trees at the voice of God, he cheerfully goes toward it; reminding us also of the Old Testament high priest, his mysterious type, who, before he entered into the Most Holy place to make an atonement, exchanged his rich attire for a simple white robe.

After having unclothed the Lord, and left him, by divine direction, only his crown of thorns, they lay him down on the wood on which he is to bleed; and thus, without being aware of it, bring about the moment predicted in Psalm xxii., where we hear the Messiah complaining, and saying, "Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me about; strong bulls

of Bashan have beset me round." O what a dying bed for the King of kings! My friends, as often as we repose on the downy cushions of divine peace, or blissfully assemble in social brotherly circles, singing hymns of hope, let us not forget that the cause of the happiness we enjoy is solely to be found in the fact, that the Lord of Glory once extended himself on the fatal tree for us.

O see him lie! His holy arms forcibly stretched out upon the cross-beam; his feet laid upon each other and bound with cords. Thus Isaac once lay on the wood on Mount Moriah. But the voice that then called out of heaven, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad!" is silent on Calvary. The executioners seize the hammer and nails. But who can bear to look upon what further occurs! A deep and anxious silence pervades the crowd, like that which is wont to fill the house of mourning when the coffin is nailed down. And, probably, not only on earth, but also in heaven at that moment, profound and solemn silence reigned. The horrible nails from the forge of hell, yet foreseen in the sanctuary of eternity, are placed on the hands and feet of the righteous Jesus, and the heavy strokes of the hammer fall. Reader, dost thou hear the sound? They thunder on thy heart, testifying in horrible language of thy sin, and at the same time of the wrath of Almighty God. O how many sleepers have awoke from their sleep of death under the echo of those strokes, and have escaped from Satan's snare! Awake also thou that art asleep in sin, and rouse thyself likewise, thou who art lulling thyself in carnal security! How many a proud and haughty heart has been broken into salutary repentance by those strokes! O why does not thy heart also break? For know that thou didst aid in swinging those hammers; and that the most crying and impious act which the world ever committed is charged to thy account.

See, the nails have penetrated through, and from both

hands and feet gushes forth the blood of the Holy One. O these nails have rent the rock of salvation for us, that it may pour forth the water of life; have reft the heavenly bush of balm, that it may send forth its perfume. Yes, they have pierced the handwriting that was against us, and have nailed it, as invalid, to the tree; and by wounding the Just One, have penetrated through the head of the old serpent, like Jael's nail through the head of Sisera. O, let no one, be deceived with respect to him who was thus nailed to the cross! Those pierced hands bless more powerfully than while they moved freely and unfettered. They are the hands of a wonderful architect, who is building the frame of an eternal Church—yea, they are the hands of a hero, which take from the strong man all his spoil. And believe me, there is no help or salvation, save in these hands; and these bleeding feet tread more powerfully than when no fetters restrained their steps. They now walk victoriously over the heads of thousands of foes, who shortly before held up their heads with boldness. Hills and mountains flow down beneath their steps, which they never would have levelled unwounded; and nothing springs or blooms in the world, except beneath the prints of these feet.

The most dreadful deed is done, and the prophetic words of the Psalm, "They pierced my hands and my feet," have received their fulfilment. The foot of the cross is then brought near to the hole dug for it; powerful men seize the rope attached to the top of it, and begin to draw, and the cross, with its victim, elevates itself and rises to its height. Thus the earth rejects the Prince of Life from its surface, and, as it seems, heaven also refuses him. But we will let the curtain drop over these horrors. Thank God! in that scene of suffering the Sun of Grace rises over a sinful world, and the Lion of Judah only ascends into the region of the spirits that have the power of the air, in order, in a mysterious conflict, eternally to disarm them on our behalf.

Look what a spectacle now presents itself! The moment the cross is elevated to its height, a purple stream falls from the wounds of the crucified Jesus through the air, and bedews the place of torture, and the sinful crowd which surrounds it. This is his legacy to his Church. We render him thanks for such a bequest. This rosy dew works wonders. It falls upon spiritual deserts, and they blossom as the rose. We sprinkle it upon the door-posts of our hearts, and are secure against destroyers and avenging angels. This dew falls on the ice of the north pole, and the accumulated frozen mass of ages thaws beneath it. It streams down on the torrid zone, and the air becomes cool and pleasant. Where this rain falls, the gardens of God spring up, lilies bloom, and what was black becomes white in the purifying stream, and what was polluted becomes pure as the light of the sun. That which dew and rain is to nature, which without them would soon become a barren waste, the crimson shower which we see falling from the cross is to human minds. There is no possibility of flourishing without it, no growth nor verdure, but everywhere desolation, barrenness, and death. Let us therefore embrace the cross, and sing with the poet:—

“ Here, at thy cross, my dying God,  
I lay my soul beneath thy love,  
Beneath the droppings of thy blood,  
Jesus, nor shall it e'er remove !”

There stands the mysterious cross—a rock against which the very waves of the curse break, a lightning-conductor by which the destroying fluid descends, which would otherwise have crushed the world. He who so mercifully engaged to direct this thunderbolt against himself, hangs yonder in profound darkness. Still he remains the Morning Star, announcing an eternal Sabbath to the world. Though rejected by heaven and earth, yet he forms, as such, the connecting link between them both, and the Mediator of

their eternal and renewed amity. Ah, see! his bleeding arms are extended wide; he stretches them out to every sinner. His hands point to the east and west; for he shall gather his children from the ends of the earth. The top of the cross is directed toward the sky; far above the world will its effects extend. Its foot is fixed in the earth; the cross becomes a wondrous tree, from which we reap the fruit of an eternal reconciliation. O, my readers, nothing more is requisite than that the Lord should grant us penitential tears, and then, by means of the Holy Spirit, show us the Saviour suffering on the cross. We then escape from all earthly care and sorrow, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. For our justification in his sight, nothing more is requisite than that, in the consciousness of our utter helplessness, we lay hold on the horns of that altar which is sprinkled with the blood that "speaketh better things than that of Abel." And the Man of Sorrows displays to us the fullness of his treasures, and bestows upon us, in a superabundant degree, the blessing of the patriarch Jacob on his son Joseph:—"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."

There stands erected the standard of the new covenant, which, when it is understood, spreads terror around it no less than delight, and produces lamentation no less than joy and rejoicing. It stands to this day, and will stand for ever, and no more fears those who would overturn it than the staff of Moses feared when those of the magicians hissed around it. And wherever it is displayed, there it is surrounded by powerful manifestations and miraculous effects. We carry it through the nations, and without a blow of the sword, conquer one country after another, and one fortress after another. Look how the missionary fields become verdant, and a springtime of the Spirit extends itself over the heathen deserts! Hark how the harps of peace resound from the isles of the sea; and behold how, between the ice-

bergs of the north, the hearts begin to glow with the fire of divine love! From whence these changes? these resurrection-wonders? From whence this shaking in the valley of dry bones? The cross is carried through the land, and beneath its shade the soil becomes verdant and the dead revive. When this wondrous cross is exhibited, with a correct exposition of its hieroglyphic characters, "lightnings, thunders, and voices" are wont to proceed. Stones melt in its vicinity, rocks rend before it, and waters, long stagnant, again ripple, clear and pure, as if some healing angel had descended into them.

"I am crucified with Christ," exclaims the apostle, and by these words points out the entire fruit which the cross bears for all believers. His meaning is, "They are not his sins, for which the curse is there endured, but mine; for he who thus expires on the cross, dies for me. Christ pays and suffers in my stead." But that of which Paul boasts is the property of us all, if by the living bond of faith and love, we are become one with the crucified Jesus. We are likewise exalted to fellowship with the cross of Christ in the sense also that our corrupt nature is condemned to death, and our old man, with his affections and lusts, is subjected to the bitter process of a lingering death, partly through the spirit of purity which dwells and rules within us, and partly by the trials and humiliations which God sends us, until the lance-wound of the death of the body makes an end of it. But it is while enduring these mortal agonies, that we first see the cross of Calvary unfold its full and peace-bestowing radiance. It arches itself, like a rainbow, over our darkness, and precedes us on our path of sorrow like a pillar of fire. O that its serene light might also shine upon our path through this vale of tears, and as the tree of liberty and of life, strike deep its roots in our souls! Apprehended by faith, may it shed its heavenly fruit into our lap, and warm and expand our hearts and minds beneath its shade!

## XL.

### CHRISTIAN VICTORY.

HALL.

[NEWMAN HALL, D. D., has been termed "Bishop of Southwark"—the working people's district in London. As pastor of Surrey Chapel, he ministers to fourteen hundred active members, oversees thirteen Sunday schools having fifty-five hundred scholars, and expends about twenty thousand dollars annually for missionary objects. He was born in 1816, graduated at the London University, and was minister of the Congregational Church of Hull for twelve years. In 1854 he took charge of Surrey Chapel. His touching appeal, "Come to Jesus," has sold over fifty thousand copies. In 1867 he visited the United States and preached a series of "Sermons," remarkable for simplicity, eloquence of thought, and earnestness of appeal. These have been published by Sheldon & Co., New York, and by their permission the following Sermon is extracted.]

*"To him that that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."*—Rev. ii. 17.

THE Christian life is often compared in Scripture to a warfare. Followers of Jesus are "soldiers." They are exhorted to put on "the whole armor of God." They "fight the good fight of faith." Some of you have long been engaged in the conflict: others have more recently entered upon it. But, whether young or old in the Christian career, all find it necessary to be constantly stirred up to watchfulness against the never-ceasing assaults of the foe. It is not enough to *put on* the armor and to *commence* the battle. He that *overcometh*, and he alone, will receive the salutation, "Well done, good and faithful servant,"—he alone shall "lay hold upon eternal life."

But we are not left to fight without encouragement. As



generals before a battle go in front of their troops to stimulate them to valor, so Christ, the Captain of our salvation, leads on the consecrated hosts of his elect; and having himself set us a glorious example of valor and victory, animates us to follow in his footsteps by the "exceeding great and precious promises" of his Word. Christian warrior!—let your eye be lifted up to Him. Behold Him beckoning you onward. Listen to Him, as from his throne of glory He exhorts you to persevering valor against the foe; and pray earnestly that his promise may be fulfilled in your case: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Let us consider first, the promise; then, the condition attached to it.

#### I. THE PROMISE.

This is twofold,—the Hidden Manna and the White Stone.

1. The *Hidden Manna*.—God fed the Israelites in the wilderness with manna. A portion of this was laid by in the ark, and thus was hidden from public view. It is here referred to as a figurative representation of the spiritual blessings bestowed upon the victor in the heavenly fight. Christ, speaking of the manna as a type of himself, said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." The manna in the wilderness sustained the life of the Israelites. But there is another life more important than that of the body. By sin the soul is dead, dead toward God. By the Holy Spirit, the "dead in trespasses and sins" are "quickened," or made alive. As the life of the new-born infant cannot be preserved without food, so the new spiritual life, which God imparts, needs continual support. Both the life, and the nourishing of it, come from Christ, and Christ alone. By His sacrifice that life becomes possible; and by his Spirit working within our hearts that life becomes actual. He sus-

tains as well as imparts spiritual vitality. He is the food of our faith: "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He is the food of our love: "we love Him because He first loved us." He is the food of our obedience: "the love of Christ constraineth us." He is the food of our peace: for when "justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He is the food of our joy: for if "we joy in God" it is "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The manna which sustained the Israelites was evidently the gift of God. And so this "hidden manna" is from heaven. It is no contrivance of man—no philosophy of human invention. It is a divine plan for the salvation of our ruined race. "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but should have everlasting life." That manna in the wilderness was sweet to the taste; yet they who fed on it grew weary of it. But the more we eat of the bread of life, the more we relish it—the greater is our appetite for it. That manna in the wilderness was needed daily. And so with this heavenly bread. Yesterday's supply will not suffice for to-day. The prayer is as needful for the soul as for the body: "Give us this day our daily bread." But if that manna was needed daily, so it was supplied; none went in vain at the appointed season—and no soul that "hungers and thirsts after righteousness" is sent empty away. The manna was supplied to the Israelites till they came to the promised land—so God has promised that His grace shall not fail His people through all their wanderings.

It is spoken of as the "*hidden* manna." Such is the Christian's life. "Our life is *hid* with Christ in God." The outward effects of it may be seen, but the inner life is invisible. So is the nourishing of the life. You may see the Christian on his knees, you may hear the words which he utters, but you cannot see the streams of divine influence

which are poured into his spirit ; nor hear the sweet whispers of divine love which fill him with joy ; nor comprehend the peace passing all understanding which he is permitted to experience. Unbelievers are often amazed at what they see in the Christian. He is troubled on every side, yet not in despair. Waves of sorrow beat upon his frail vessel, yet it does not sink. Men now threaten, now allure, but he holds on his way. What to others is an irresistible charm, is no attraction to him. What is a terror to others, deters not him. Why does he not faint beneath the burden ? why does he not sink in the storm ? Because he eats of the "hidden manna." "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." "He hath taken him into his banqueting-room, and the banner over him is love."

Were this promise merely the reward of final victory, that victory itself would never be gained. We need to eat this manna during our pilgrimage. We cannot live without it. Every act of overcoming will be followed by a verification of the promise ; "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." Yet we must look beyond the present life for its full accomplishment. "To him that overcometh" at the last, "shall be given the hidden manna," in a sense of which at present we have but a very faint conception. As the manna was hidden in the ark, and that ark was hidden behind the curtain of the Holy of Holies, so the Christian's hope, "as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, enters into that which is within the veil." Those joys we cannot yet conjecture ; their splendor is too intense ; we should be blinded by excessive light ; we should be overpowered by the excellent glory. One look of heaven would unfit us for earth. It is wisely appointed that at present this manna should in one sense be hidden, even from ourselves. We are as yet but babes—such strong meat would not suit us now ; we must be content with simpler fare. But Oh ! if the manna, though at present so partially and imperfectly appreciated, can pro-

duce such peace and joy, what must be the bliss of entering into the holiest of all, and there, in the presence of God himself, feasting on it eternally! Unceasing, unlimited reception of divine influences into the soul! Uninterrupted fellowship with Him who is the only Fountain of life, and purity, and happiness! Perfect love! But at present, such full fruition is "hidden. "Now we see through a glass darkly;" "now we know but in part;" "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But how unspeakably blessed are they to whom, partially in this world and perfectly in the next, the promise shall be verified: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna!"

2. *The White Stone*.—Reference is made to the *tessera hospitalis*, the tally or token of hospitality employed by the ancients. At a time when houses of public entertainment were less common, private hospitality was the more necessary. When one person was received kindly by another, or a contract of friendship was entered into, the *tessera* was given. It was so named from its shape, being four-sided; it was sometimes of wood, sometimes of stone; it was divided into two by the contracting parties; each wrote his own name on half of the *tessera*; then they exchanged pieces, and therefore the name or device on the piece of the *tessera* which each received, was the name the other person had written upon it, and which no one else knew but him who received it. It was carefully prized, and entitled the bearer to protection and hospitality. Plautus, in one of his plays, refers to this custom. Hanno inquires of a stranger where he may find Agorastocles, and discovers to his surprise, that he is addressing the object of his search. "If so," he says, "compare, if you please, this hospitable *tessera*; here it is; I have it with me." Agorastocles replies, "It is the exact counterpart; I have the other part at home." Hanno responds, "O, my friend! I rejoice to meet thee; thy father was my friend, my guest; I divided with him this hospitable

*tessera*." "Therefore," said Agorastocles, "thou shalt have a home with me, for I reverence hospitality."

Beautiful illustration of gospel truth! The Saviour visits the sinner's heart, and being received as a guest, bestows the white stone, the token of His unchanging love. It is not we who, in the first instance, desire this compact. Far from it! But Jesus, anxious to bless us, kindly forces himself on our regard. By His Spirit, He persuades us to give Him admission to our hearts. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." We often disregarded His appeal. Yet, with what condescending kindness did He persevere! And when at length we opened the door, we saw Him laden with blessings which He had been long waiting to bestow. The feast which was then spread was all of His providing. He who went to be "the guest of one that was a sinner," inverts the usual course. He invites himself and brings the feast. What have we fit to set before so august and holy a visitant? But He who chooses the sinner's heart as His banqueting-chamber, spreads there His choicest gifts, His exceeding great and precious promises, His finished sacrifice, His human sympathy, His perfect example, His pure precepts, His all-prevailing intercession, the various developments of His infinite love. He "sup with us," and makes us "sup with Him." He enrolls our name among His friends. "He makes an everlasting covenant with us, ordered in all things and sure." He promises never to leave nor forsake us. He tells us we "shall never perish." He gives us the *tessera*, the WHITE STONE!

Is not this "the witness of the Spirit," the "earnest of the promised possession?" Does not "the Spirit witness with our spirit that we are born of God?" Does not our experience of the friendship of Jesus correspond with what we are taught of it in the Scriptures? "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep

that which I have committed unto Him, against that day. The "love of God is shed abroad" in the heart of the believer. He says, with humble confidence, "*My Lord, and my God!*"

On this white stone is inscribed a "new name." The part of the *tessera* which each of the contracting parties received contained the name of the other. And, therefore, "the new name" on the "white stone," which he that overcometh receives, is that of Him who gives it. By the unbeliever, God is known as Power, as Majesty, as Justice. He is dreaded. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The Christian alone knows Him as "Love"! Jehovah has now "a new name." He was once Ruler—now He is Friend; He was once Judge—now He is Father. Reader! do you know God by His "new name"? Do you so know Him as to wish no longer to hide *from* Him, but to hide *in* Him, as the only home the universe can furnish in which you can be safe and happy? Have you learned to say, "Our Father which art in heaven?" If we have indeed received this "white stone," let us continually be reading the "new name" engraven on it. Here I am assured that the Holy Ghost is my Teacher, my Guide, my Comforter; that the Eternal Word, the only begotten Son, is my Saviour, my Friend, my Brother; that the infinite Jehovah is my Father, and that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

We are told that no man knoweth this new name, "saving he that receiveth it." He knows it for himself, but no one else can read it for him. Thus it resembles the "*hidden manna*." The frivolous may deride, fools may mock, the unbeliever may deny, the skeptic may bring forth his objections in all the pride of a false philosophy; but the Christian, even if unable to reply to the caviller, or to make intelligible to any other mind his own strong assurance, has an evidence within him which nothing can shake, for God has written on his heart, "His new best name of Love."

Fellow-pilgrims to the heavenly Canaan, how precious is this token ! We are travellers through the desert ; for though the enjoyments of earth are many, yet this life, compared with what is to come, is a wilderness. We are away from home ; we are exposed to privations, tempests, foes ; we constantly need a refuge. But we are never far from the house of a friend. Everywhere, in every city and every village, on the desert and on the ocean, in the solitude of secrecy, and in the solitude of a crowd, in the bustle of business, and in the sick chamber, a Friend is at hand, who will always recognise the white stone He gave us as a token of His love. We have only to present it to claim the fulfilment of His promise. How wide will the door be thrown open for our reception ! What divine entertainment we shall receive ! What safety from peril ! what succor in difficulty ! what comfort in trouble ! what white raiment ! what heavenly food ! O, that we valued the *tessera* more, that we sought more frequent interviews with our heavenly Friend, that we more habitually resorted as invited guests to Jesus, and dwelt in Him as the home of our souls ! We shall never find the door closed against us ; we shall never be received reluctantly ; He will never allow us to think that we are intruders. Jesus is never ashamed of His poor relations, nor treats them coldly because they need His help. The greater our distress, the more shall we prove His liberality and tender sympathy.

And as regards this stone, as well as the hidden manna, we can look beyond the present life. A day is coming when we shall be compelled to leave the homes of earth, however endeared. We must embrace for the last time the friends united to us as our own souls. Though we have travelled along the road many a year together, we must now separate, and go on alone. They may accompany us to the river side, but we must cross it by ourselves. What cheering voice will greet us then ? What kind roof will receive us then ? What loving friend will welcome us then ?

But we shall not have left our best treasure behind us !

No! we shall carry the white stone with us; and with this we shall look for no inferior abode, but with unhesitating step shall advance at once right up to the palace of the Great King. We présent the *tessera*; the "new name" is legible upon it; the angelic guards recognise the symbol; the everlasting gates lift up their heads; and the voice of Jesus himself invites us to enter, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom!"

Such is the welcome that every soul shall experience to whom the promise is fulfilled: "I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."

II. THE CONDITION ANNEXED TO THE PROMISE, "TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH!"

A great war is going on between the church and the powers of darkness. It is not an affair of strategy between two vast armies, wherein skilful manœuvres determine the issue, many on either side never coming into actual combat; but every Christian has to fight hand to hand with the enemy. We cannot be lost in the crowd. We may not stand in the middle of the hollow square, without sharing the perils of the outer rank. Every Christian must not only occupy his post in the grand army, but must personally grapple with the foe.

Before conversion there was no fighting. The devil's suggestions and the heart's inclinations were allied. Then we did the enemy's bidding, or were lulled to sleep by his intoxicating cup. But when light shone into the soul, and we strove to escape, the struggle began. God, as our Creator and Redeemer, justly demands our obedience and love. Whatever interferes with these claims, is an enemy summoning us to battle. The world of frivolity is our foe. How numerous and insinuating are its temptations—the more perilous because of the difficulty of defining them!

Moreover, lawful pleasures and necessary cares become dangerous when they cease to be subordinate to the love of



God. The enjoyments He bestows and the labors He appoints, are calculated to minister to godliness,—and yet they may be perverted to idolatry, by our forgetting Him on whom our highest thoughts should be fixed. What danger is there that things in themselves holy and beautiful may thus become pernicious and destructive!

The flesh too, furnishes its contingent to the army of our foes. Not that any of our natural appetites, being divinely bestowed, can have in them the nature of sin. No! the flesh, as God made it, is pure and holy. But those instincts, which, regulated by the revealed will of their Author, are “holiness to the Lord,” may, by unhallowed gratification, become those “fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” As we carry about with us these animal propensities, there is necessity for constant vigilance lest our own nature, being abused, should become our destroyer.

Inbred depravity lurks in the heart of even the true believer. Though dethroned, it is not completely expelled. With what selfishness, covetousness, vanity, hastiness of temper, uncharitableness, have we not to contend! Who has not some sin which most easily besets him? How varied are the forms of unbelief! Spiritual pride, too, corrupts our very graces, piety itself furnishing an occasion of evil, so that when we have conquered some temptation or performed some duty, our victory is often tarnished, our holy things corrupted, by our falling into the snare of self-complacency.

Above all, there is that great adversary who “goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” He avails himself of the world, and the flesh, and the infirmities of the spirit, to tempt the soul to sin. This is no fable, although one of Satan’s most skilful stratagems is to make men disbelieve in his existence. Overlooked or despised, a foe is already half victorious. But the Captain of our Salvation, in his word, often warns us both of the craft and of the violence of our adversary. We sometimes read of “the wiles of the

devil;" and sometimes of "the fiery darts of the wicked one." They who fail to watch and pray, are sure to be vanquished by such a foe.

These are our enemies! And if we would possess the promise we must "overcome." A mere profession of religion is of no avail. It is not enough for our name to appear on the muster-roll of the camp. Many wear the soldier's dress who know nothing of the soldier's heart. Many are glad to glitter on the grand parade who fall off from the hard-fought, blood-stained battle-field. It is not enough to buckle on our armor; many do this, and lay it aside again. We must devote ourselves entirely and unreservedly to this great daily battle of life. There is no exemption of *persons*. Women must fight, as well as men; the tender and the timid must be as Amazons in the conflict. Children must carry the shield, and wield the sword. The aged and infirm must keep the ranks. The sick and wounded must not be carried to the rear. No substitute can be provided, and there is no discharge in this war. There is no exemption on account of *circumstances*. The rich and poor, the learned and the unlearned, the cheerful and the sad, all must fight. No accumulation of trouble, no unexpected death of friends, can be an excuse for laying down our arms. We must go to the marriage feast, and we must attend the funeral procession, as warriors, wearing our armor and grasping our weapons. We must be like those spoken of by Nehemiah, "every man with one hand wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." There is no exemption of *place*. Foes lie in wait for the Christian wherever he goes—in the mart of commerce, in the busy workshop, when he returns to his home, when he rests on his bed, in the bustle of the day, in the silence of the night, in the circle of his friends, in the bosom of his family, in society, alone, in the city, in the fields, in his walks of benevolence, in his private meditations, in the church, in his secret retirement, when he worships with the great congregation, and when he enters his closet

and shuts the door. He can never elude the enemy; he carries the foe in his own breast; the conflict ceases not! There is no exemption of *time*, no season of rest. No truce is sounded. Satan never beats a retreat, except to lead us into an ambuscade. No white flag comes out that can be trusted. If we parley, it is at our peril; if we pause, we are wounded or taken captive. Wars on earth may often terminate by mutual agreement. It is a war of extermination; no quarter is given; either we must trample Satan under foot, or Satan will drag us down to hell!

It is a warfare until death. While we are in the body it will be always true—"We wrestle." The oldest Christian cannot lay aside his weapons. "Having done all, stand." A great word that! "Having done all!" "What!" you may say, "after a long life of conflict, surely I may put aside my armor, and sheathe my sword, and recline on some sunny bank, and enjoy myself after my victory!" No; you must not expect it; "having done all" it is enough if you stand at bay on the battle-ground; all you can hope for in this world is to maintain your post, still defying the foe, who will be still meditating fresh attacks. You will never be able to say with St. Paul "I *have* fought a good fight," until you can also say, "I have finished my course."

It is not the appearance of fighting. It is not a few faint, irresolute strokes. "So fight I," said the apostle, "not as one that beateth the air." We must be resolute, determined, in earnest, giving our enemy no advantage. We must "not give place to the devil." We must watch against the smallest beginnings of sin. By "keeping the heart with all diligence," by putting on "the whole armor of God," by having faith as our shield, righteousness as our breastplate, the hope of salvation as our helmet, by keeping "the sword of the Spirit" bright with exercise, "praying with all prayer," standing near our Captain, looking to Him, relying upon Him, knowing that "without Him we can do nothing,"—so must we fight! All this is necessary, if we would overcome.

It is not so easy to fight this fight as some suppose. It is not a true faith merely, an evangelical creed, a scriptural church, a comfortable sermon once or twice a week, a little Sabbath-keeping, an agreeable pause in your pleasures, giving to them a new relish—it is not this which constitutes Christianity. You that think religion so very easy a thing, have a care lest, when too late, you find that you knew not what true religion meant. Easy? A depraved being to trample upon his lusts—a proud being to lie prostrate with humility and self-reproach—they that are “slow of heart to believe,” to receive the Gospel as little children? Easy? To “crucify the flesh,” “to deny ungodliness,” “to cut off a right hand, and to pluck out a right eye?” Easy? To be in the world, and yet not of the world—to come out from it, not by the seclusion of the cloister, but by holiness of life—to be diligent in its duties, yet not absorbed by them; appreciating its innocent delights, and yet not ensnared by them; beholding its attractions, and yet rising superior to them? Easy? To live surrounded by objects which appeal to the sight, and yet to endure as seeing what is invisible? Easy? To pray and see no answer to prayer, and still pray on—to fight this battle, and find fresh foes ever rising up, yet still to fight on—to be harassed with doubts and fears, and yet walk on in darkness, though we see no light, staying ourselves upon God? Easy? To be preparing for a world we have never visited, in opposition to so much that is captivating in a world where we have always dwelt, whose beauties we have seen, whose music we have heard, whose pleasures we have experienced? Easy? To resist that subtle foe who has cast down so many of the wise and the mighty? Easy? When Jesus says it is a “strait gate,” and that if we would enter we must “strive,” bidding us “take up our cross daily, deny ourselves, and follow Him?” Ah! it is no soft flowery meadow, along which we may languidly stroll, but a rough, craggy cliff that we must climb. “To him that *overcometh*!” It is no smooth, placid stream, along which we may dreamily

float, but a tempestuous ocean we must stem. "To him that *overcometh*!" It is no easy lolling in a cushioned chariot, that bears us on without fatigue and peril. The trumpet has sounded to arms; it is not peace, but war, war for liberty, war for life, on the issue of which our everlasting destiny depends! If we are to be saved, we must "overcome."

But though the conflict is arduous, the encouragements are great. We have armor of proof. We have a mighty Champion. Victory is insured to the brave. Others who stood on the same battle-field and fought with the same enemies, are now enjoying an eternal triumph. Not one faithful warrior ever perished. Their foes were not fewer than ours, their strength was not greater. They overcame by the same "blood of the Lamb" on which we rely.

"Once they were mourning here below,  
And wet their couch with tears;  
They wrestled hard, as we do now,  
With sins, and doubts, and fears."

But they are wearing their crowns, they are enjoying their rest; and the feeblest and most unworthy of our own day, trusting in the same Saviour, shall inherit the same promise. Then let us overcome. Sheathe not the sword, and it shall never be wrested from you; lay not down the shield, and no fiery dart shall ever penetrate it; face the foe, and he shall never trample you down, never drive you back. Listen to your Captain; how he animates you onward! Look to the crown He is ready to bestow upon you; eat of the hidden manna which He gives; read the name in the "white stone,"—the name of God,—His name of love, recorded for your encouragement; and thus be animated to walk worthy of this holy alliance, and not to allow the foe to wrench from you such an assurance of divine favor, such a passport to heavenly bliss. A little more conflict, and that "white stone" shall introduce you to the inheritance above, where,

in the everlasting repose of the inner sanctuary, you shall without intermission eat of the hidden manna.

“Then let my soul march boldly on,  
Press forward to the heavenly gate;  
There peace and joy eternal reign,  
And glittering robes for conquerors wait.”

Some of you may consider this subject visionary and unreal. You say, “I know nothing of this warfare. I know what the conflict of business is, the race of fashion, the bustle of toil or pleasure; but to anxiety about spiritual things I am a stranger.” You are enjoying peace—but—*what* peace? There is a captive in a dungeon—his limbs are fast chained to the walls—yet he is singing songs. How is it? Satan has given him to drink of his drugged cup, and he does not know where he is. Look at that other. He says, “it is peace.” There is truly no fighting, but he is grovelling in the dust, and the heel of his foe is upon his neck. Such is the peace of every one going on in his wickedness, unpardoned and unsaved. “Taken captive by the devil at his will.” Chained in Satan’s boat, you are swiftly gliding down the stream to ruin, and because it is smooth, you dream that it is safe! What is the difference between the saint and the sinner? Not that in the saint there is no sin. Not that in the sinner there is never a thought about God. The difference is this—that the saint is overcoming his sin; but the sin is overcoming the sinner. O, what a terrible thing if sin have the upper hand! No “hidden manna” is yours. The symbols of religion you may look at, but real religion must be a stranger to you. You know not its enjoyment. You do not taste it. It is a hidden thing. Heaven too will be hidden. You hear of its gates of pearl—but they will never open to you. You may catch the distant accents of its songs—but in those songs you will never join. And that “white stone” cannot be yours. You have no joyful anticipation

of heaven—but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation—or else the insensate resolve not to think at all. And the “new name”—no! you cannot read it! You know God by no such name as makes you seek His company. The thought of Him renders you unhappy, and therefore you banish it from your mind. You are not now alarmed, but soon the spell may be broken, and you may find the chains riveted upon your soul *for ever*.

I fancy I hear you say, “I wish that before it is too late, I could escape! But mine is a hopeless case. My heart is hardened against the Gospel, and evil habit has so got the mastery over me, that I have no power to begin this conflict!” No, *you* have no power; but One has visited this world, and taken our nature, who can help you. The mighty Son of God became the suffering Son of Man, that He might be the Liberator of our enslaved race. He burst open the prison doors, that captive souls might escape. He stands near you, ready to break off your fetters and strengthen you to fight the enemy who has so long oppressed you. Tell Him your simple but sad tale; how helpless, how miserable, how ruined you are! Tell Him you want to be saved, but know not how to begin the work, and ask Him both to begin and complete it for you! Let your prayer be this: “Be merciful to me a sinner;” and He who “came to destroy the works of the devil,” He “whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive,” will receive your “humble petitions; and though you be tied and bound with the chain of your sins, He, in the pitifulness of His great mercy, will loose you.” He will pardon your past shameful concessions to the foe, and, arraying you in “the whole armor of God,” and animating you with His Holy Spirit, He will enable you so to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, that you also shall share in the prize of them that overcome; you also shall eat of the “hidden manna,” and receive the “white stone.”

## XLI.

### THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD.

SIMPSON.

[MATTHEW SIMPSON, D.D., LL.D., a Bishop and the incomparable orator, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was born at Cadiz, Ohio, June 21st 1810. From childhood a diligent student, he mastered the German language, so as to read Luther's version of the Bible, in his ninth year. He graduated from Alleghany College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, and in 1833 received a medical diploma. His heart, however, was given to Christ's work, and the following year he became a minister in the Pittsburgh Conference. In 1839 he was elected president of Asbury University, Greencastle, Indiana. Nine years later the General Conference appointed him editor of the "Western Christian Advocate," and in 1852 he was called to the episcopate. His residence—a gift of his friends—is in Philadelphia. Throughout the late contest, Bishop Simpson did much to strengthen the hands of President Lincoln, and to nerve the spirit of the nation to endure any sacrifice for the cause of the Union. His zeal and executive abilities have enabled him to perform herculean labors; but his overtaxed constitution demanded a rest from all work during the summer of 1871. A magnetic power of personal sympathy, exhaustless stores of illustration from nature and literature, picturesqueness of expression, are elements of his almost undefinable eloquence. A volume of his Sermons is in contemplation, and may appear next year, if his health and time permit their revision. The following is an unedited discourse, reported as delivered on Easter Sunday, 1866.]

*"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."*—1 Cor. xv. 20.

A LITTLE more than eighteen hundred years ago, as the light of the morning was breaking around the walls of Jerusalem, there was a guard placed about a sepulchre in a small garden near the walls of the city. They were guarding a grave. Some strange scenes had occurred on the Friday before. While a man whom they had taken



from the hills of Galilee and around the little lake of Capernaum had been hanging on the cross crucified as a malefactor, strange signs appeared in the heavens, and on the earth, and in the temple. It was rumored that he had said he would rise the third morning. The third morning was coming, and, as the light began to break in the East, there came two women silently and sadly wending their way among the tents that were pitched all around the city of Jerusalem; they had sojourned all night in the tents, for as yet the gates of the city had not been opened. They came to see the sepulchre, and were bringing spices in their hands. They loved the man who had been crucified as a malefactor, because of his goodness, his purity, and his compassion. They seemed to be almost the only hearts on earth that did love him deeply, save the small circle of friends who had gathered around him. There had been curses upon his head as he hung on the cross—curses from the bystanders, curses from the soldiers, curses from the people. They cried: "Away with him; his blood be on us and on our children!" and on that morning there were none but a few feeble, obscure, heart-broken friends that dared to come near his grave.

A little more than eighteen hundred years have passed away, and on the anniversary of that day, the morning of the first day of the week, the first Sabbath after the full moon and the vernal equinox, at the same season, the whole world comes to visit that grave. The eyes of princes and of statesmen, the eyes of the poor and the humble, in all parts of the earth, are turned toward that sepulchre. All through Europe, men and women are thinking of that grave, and of him who lay in it. All over Western lands, from ocean to ocean, on mountain top and in valley, over broad prairies and deep ravines, the eyes and hearts of people are gathered round that grave. In the darkness of Africa, here and there, we see them stretching out their hands

towards it. Along from the coasts of India and the heights of the Himalayas, they have heard of that grave, and are bending toward it. The Chinese, laying aside their prejudices, have turned their eyes westward, and are looking toward that sepulchre. Along the shores of the seas, over the mountain tops and in the valleys, the hearts of the people have not only been gathering around the grave, but they have caught a glimpse of the rising inmate, who ascended in his glory toward heaven. The song of jubilee has gone forth, and the old men are saying, "The Lord is risen from the dead." The young men and matrons catch up the glowing theme, and the little children around our festive boards, scarcely comprehending the source of their joy, with glad hearts are now joyful, because Jesus has risen from the dead. All over the earth tidings of joy have gone forth, and as the valleys have been ringing out their praises on this bright Sabbath morning how many hearts have been singing,

"Our Jesus is gone up on high!"

Why this change? What hath produced such a wonderful difference in public feeling? The malefactor once cursed, now honored; the obscure and despised, now sought for; the rising Redeemer, not then regarded by men, now universally worshipped. What is the cause of this great change?—how brought about? The subject of this morning, taken from the associations of this day, call us to consider, as briefly as we may, the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and some of the consequences which flow to us from that resurrection.

It is important for us to fix clearly in our mind the fact that this is one reason why such days are remembered in the annals of the church, as well as in the annals of nations; for our faith rests on facts, and the mind should clearly embrace the facts that we may feel that we are standing on

firm ground. This fact of the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the Christian system; for the Apostle says: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ will perish." If Christ be not risen, we shall never see the fathers and the mothers who have fallen asleep in Jesus; we shall never see the little ones which have gone up to be, as we believe, angels before the throne of God. If Christ be not raised, we are of all men the most miserable, because we are fancying future enjoyment which never can be realized; but if Christ be raised, then shall we also rise, and them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. And that our minds may rest as to the fact of Christ's resurrection, let us notice how God hath arranged the evidences to secure the knowledge of this fact clearly to man.

The first point to which our attention is invited is the fact of Christ's death. Were not this fact clearly established, it would be in vain to try to prove his resurrection from the dead. Christ might have suffered for man in some obscure place; he might have laid down his life as a ransom, and yet there would have been no legal evidence of it. God allowed the wrath of man to become the instrument of praising him, in that he suffered Christ to be taken under what was then the legal process—arrested first by the great council of the Jews, and then by the authority of the Roman governor, so that the matter became a matter of public record—a legal transaction. The highest power, both of the Jewish and Roman governments, united in this fact of his arrest, his trial, and his condemnation to death. Not only was this permitted, but the time of the occurrence was wisely arranged. It was at the feast of the Jews, the Passover, when all the Jews came up to keep the Passover. They came, not only from Egypt, but from all the country through which they were scattered. Jerusalem could not hold the people that came together; they pitched their tents all around the city, on the hills and

in the valleys. It was the time of full moon, when there was brightness all night, and they came together with safety and security. The multitude, then, was there to witness the scene, so that it might be attested by people from all parts of Judea, and from all countries round about Judea.

Then, again, the form of the death was such as to be not a sudden one, but one of torture, passing through many hours. Had the execution been a very sudden one, as it might have been, the death would have been equally efficacious, yet it would not have been witnessed by so many; but as he hung those dreadful hours, from nine until three, the sun being darkened, what an opportunity was given to the people passing by to be impressed with the scene! The crucifixion was near the city; the crowd was there; the temple worship was in process; the strangers were there; and as one great stream passes on some festive day through the great thoroughfare of your city, so passed the stream of men, women, and children by that cross on which the Saviour hung. They wagged their heads and reviled as they passed by. The very ones whom Jesus had healed, whose fathers had been cured of leprosy or fever, whose mothers' eyes had been opened; the ones who had been raised up from beds of sickness by the touch of that Saviour, passed by and reviled, and said: "He saved others, himself he cannot save." The multitude saw him as he hung suffering on the cross.

Then, again, the circumstances attending his death were such as to invite universal attention. It was not designed that the death should be a private one; not merely a legal transaction, a matter soon over, but a protracted and agonizing spectacle—one to be seen and known by the multitude; but, in addition, that man's attention should be drawn to something to be connected with that wonderful scene; hence God called upon the heavens and the earth, the air and the graves, and the temple itself for testimony. It is

said that before the coronation of a Prince in olden time in Europe, and in some kingdoms the custom is still observed, there is sent forth a herald, sometimes three days in advance, at different periods according to the custom, to issue a challenge to any one that dares to claim the kingdom to come and prove his right, and to announce that the coronation of his Prince is to take place. Methinks it was such a challenge God gave to all the powers of humanity and to all the powers of darkness. There hung suffering on the cross he who died for human woe, and as he hung God was about to crown him King of kings and Lord of lords on the morning of the third day. He sends forth his voice of challenge, and as he speaks the earth rocks to its centre; that ground, shaking and convulsing, was a call to man to witness what was about to occur. Not only is there a voice of earth. Yonder the sun clothed himself in sackcloth for three hours, as much as to say: "There may be gloom for three days; the great source of light hath veiled himself, as in a mantle of night, for three days. As, for three hours, this darkness hangs, but as out of the darkness the light shines forth, so, at the end of the three days, shall the Sun of Righteousness shine out again, the great centre of glory, with that glory which he had with the Father from the foundation of the world." It was the herald's voice that passed through the heavens, and that spoke through all the orbs of light, "Give attention, ye created beings, to what is to happen!" But it was not alone in the earth, which is the great centre, nor in the heavens, which is the great source of light, that the tidings were proclaimed.

Look in yonder valley. The tombs are there; the prophets have been buried there. Yon hill-side is full of the resting-places of the dead; generations on generations have been buried there; friends are walking in it, and they are saying, "Yonder is a mighty judge in Israel; there is the tomb of a prophet." They were passing to and fro through

that valley of death, when the earthquake's tread was heard, and behold! the tombs were opened, the graves displayed the dead within, and there was a voice that seemed to call from the very depths of the graves, "Hear, O sons of men!" What feelings must have thrilled through the hearts of those who stood by those monuments, and bended over those graves, when, thrown wide open, the doors bursting and the rocks giving way, they saw the forms of death come forth, and recognised friends that once they had known. What was to occur? What could all this mean? Then the great sacrifice was offered. It was at three o'clock in the afternoon when Christ was to give up the ghost. Yonder the multitude of pious people were gathered toward the temple. The outer court was full; the doors and gates which led into the sanctuary were crowded; the lamb was before the altar; the priest in his vestments had taken the sacrificial knife; the blood was to be shed at the hour of three; the multitude were looking. Yonder hangs a veil; it hides that inner sanctuary; there are cherubim in yonder, with their wings spread over the mercy-seat; the shekinah once dwelt there; God himself in his glory was there, and the people are bending to look in. No one enters into that veil save the high priest, and he, with blood and in the midst of incense, but once a year; but it was the mercy-seat, and the eye of every pious Jew was directed toward that veil, thinking of the greater glory which lay beyond it. As the hour of three came, and as the priest was taking the sacrificial knife from the altar and was about to slay the lamb, behold! an unseen hand takes hold of that veil and tears it apart from top to bottom, and has thrown open the mercy-seat, not before seen by men. The cherubim are there; the altar, with its covering of blood, is there; the resting-place of the ark is there; it is the holiest of holies. Methinks the priest drops the knife, the lamb goes free, for the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world is suffering for man.

The way to the holy of holies is open—a new and a living way, which man may not close, which priest alone cannot enter; but a way is open whereby humanity, oppressed and downtrodden, from all parts of the earth, may find its way to the mercy-seat of God. There was a call to the pious worshipper by voices which seemed to say: “An end to all the sacrifices, an end to all the suffering victims, an end to all the sprinkled hyssop that is used in purification, for One has come to do the will of God on whom the burden of man had been laid.”

Now here were all these calls to humanity from all parts, as if to announce the great transaction. While all this was occurring, Christ was on the cross suffering the agony of crucifixion. How deep that agony, we need not attempt to tell you; it was fearful; and yet no complaint escaped his lips, no murmuring was there. He bore the sins of many in his own flesh on the tree. He heard the multitudes revile him; he saw them wag their heads; he remembered that the disciples had fled from him—one followed afar off, but the rest had gone; and yet he complained not. Friends and kindred had all left him, and he trod the wine-press alone. He drank the cup in all its bitterness, and no complaint escaped from him. One left him that had never forsaken him before. “The world is gone, the disciples I have fed and taught have all fled and passed away—all have forsaken me.” But there was no time until that moment of fearful darkness came, when all the load of guilt was upon him and for our sins he was smitten, that his spirit was crushed, and he called out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” All else might go—it were little; “Why hast *Thou* forsaken me?” But it is over; the darkness is past; the load is borne; and I hear him say, “It is finished;” he bows his head and dies.

Now there is publicity for the transaction. It demanded public investigation, it received it. There was not only the

mental agony united with the agony of crucifixion, but there was the voluntary giving up of his life; yet, lest there might be some suspicion, to all this was added the proof of the fact of his death. When the limbs of the others were broken, and he was perceived to be dead, the soldier thrust the spear into his side, and there came out of that side both water and blood. There is a peculiarity in the sacred writings. A little incident, that seems to be mentioned without care, becomes the strongest possible proof, not only of the fact of Christ's death, but of the nature of his death. When that sentence was written, the human frame was not understood, the circulation of the blood was not understood. Anatomists had not then, as they have now, unveiled the human system; the great science of pathology had not yet been clearly taught to man; and yet, in that sentence we have almost a world of meaning. For it is well attested now that where persons die from violent mental emotion, by what is termed a broken heart, a crushed spirit, there is always formed a watery secretion around the heart. It was not known then to the soldier who lifted up that spear and pierced the body; but so much of that water had secreted around the heart that he saw it issuing forth from the pierced side, unstained by blood, which showed that that great heart had been crushed by agony within.

When taken from the cross he was put in the sepulchre. His friends had given him up, his disciples had forsaken him; some of them saw him die; they knew that he was crucified, and they abandoned him. They were returning to their former employments; but his enemies remembered he had said he would rise the third day, and they put a guard around him. The Roman soldiers were there; the king's seal was on the stone rolled over the mouth of the sepulchre; they made everything secure. Here again God ordered that we should have abundant proof of Christ's crucifixion. He was crucified on Friday, which was to them



the last day of the week, resting in the grave on our Saturday, which is their Sabbath, and then comes the first day of the week, our Sabbath morning, made our Sabbath because of Christ's resurrection from the dead. There came an humble visitant to the tomb, Mary Magdalene; she had been healed of much, forgiven much, and she loved much. Mary, the mother of James, came also and beheld the scenes that occurred; but there had been strange commotions elsewhere. Heaven had been gathering around that grave. Angels had been watching there; they had seen the Roman guard; they had seen the shining spear and the polished shield; they had seen that Christ was held as a prisoner by the greatest powers on earth. Methinks I see the angelic host as they gathered around the throne of God and looked up into the face of Omnipotence, and if ever there was a time when there was silence in heaven for half an hour, it was before the morning light of the third day dawned. I hear them say, "How long shall man triumph? How long shall human power exalt itself? How long shall the powers of darkness hold jubilee? Let us away and roll away the stone; let us away and frighten yonder Roman guard and drive them from the sepulchre." They waited until permission was given. I see the angel coming down from the opening doors of glory; he hastens outside the walls of Jerusalem and down to the sepulchre; when they saw him coming the keepers shook, they became like dead men; he rolls away the stone and sets himself by the mouth of the sepulchre. Christ, girding himself with all the power of his divinity, rises from the grave. He leads captivity captive, tears the crown from the head of death, and makes light the darkness of the grave. Behold him as he rises just preparatory to his rising up to glory. Oh, what a moment was that! Hell was preparing for its jubilee; the powers of earth were preparing for a triumph; but as the grave yields its prey, Christ, charged with being an impostor, is

proved to be the son of God with power; it is the power of his resurrection from the dead.

There was Christ's resurrection from the dead. He became the first fruits of them that slept. 'But to give the amplest proofs of his resurrection he lingered on earth to be seen of men, and to be seen in such a manner as to show that he was still the Saviour Christ. In my younger days I used often to wonder why was it that Mary Magdalene came first to the sepulchre, and the mother of James that stood there—why he should appear to them; but in later days I have said it was to show that he was the Saviour still; that the same nature was there which had made him stoop to the lowliest of the low—the power that enabled him to heal the guiltiest of the guilty; that that power, that compassion, were with him still. Though now raised beyond death and triumphing over hell, he still had within him the Saviour's heart. Methinks I see when Peter had run in anxiety to tell the news, Mary remained there; she could not fully comprehend it; the grave was open, the napkins were there; it was said he was not there, but he was risen. And yet, there was a darkness upon her; she could not fully conceive, it seems to me, the resurrection of the dead. She stood wondering, when she heard a voice behind her which said, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Bathed in tears as she was, she turned round and saw the man standing, and taking him to be the gardener, and supposing that he had taken the body and carried it away as not fit to lie in that tomb or be in that garden, she said: "If thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. If he must not lie in this tomb, if he cannot lie in the garden, if as a malefactor he must be cast out from man, tell me where the body is, and I will take it away." It was a proof of her affection. A voice said, "Mary, Mary." Oh, she recognised it, and her heart cried out: "Rabboni, my Lord and my God!" and then she would

have thrown herself at his feet and bathed those feet again with her tears, but he said: "Touch me not, I am not ascended to my Father; go and tell the disciples and Peter that I am risen from the dead." See the compassion of the Saviour! and then that message! "Tell the disciples, and Peter." Why send a message to him? Because he cursed and swore and denied the Master. The other disciples might have said, if Christ is risen, he may receive and bless us all, but Peter is gone, hopelessly and irretrievably gone; he that forsook his Master and denied him, there is no hope for him. And yet, said Jesus, "Go and tell the disciples and Peter"—poor backslidden Peter. Jesus knew his sorrow and anguish, and almost felt the throbbings of his broken heart, and he sent a message to Peter. He may be a disciple still—may come back and be saved through the boundless love of Christ. Oh, the compassion of the Son of God! Thank God that Peter's Saviour is on the throne this morning. Not only was he seen by these, but he met with the disciples journeying by the way and explained the Scriptures to them; and as they met in the upper room he was there. When the doors were unopened he came in their midst and said, "Peace!" breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Thus he met with them, and said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy fingers, and be not faithless but believing." Then afterward he was seen by five hundred, and from the Mount of Olives, while the disciples were gathered around him, he was received up into glory. They saw him, and as he went he blessed them. The last vision that ever humanity had of the Son of God ere he ascended to heaven was that of spreading out his hands in blessing. Oh, my Saviour hath thus gone up, and he dropped from those outstretched hands a blessing which falls to-day like the gentle dew all over the earth; it reaches heart after heart. It hath reached patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, fathers and mothers and little

children, and, thank God, the heavenly dew, as from those outstretched hands, is coming down on our assembly this very morning. On this glad day blessings are dropping from the throne of God upon us from this risen Saviour. He hath ascended up on high, the gates have opened for him, and he hath gone to his throne in glory.

Let us look at a few of the results that flow to us from these facts thus sustained of his death and resurrection from the dead !

In the first place, it establishes all Bible declarations. It had been predicted that he should not stay in the grave, and when he arose it put the seal to the Old Testament as the Word of God. The prophecy in him fulfilled gave glorious proof that the other parts of it should be also fulfilled as the word of an unchanging God.

Again, in his resurrection we see a proof of his divine power. No man hath been raised from the dead by his own power. All died, from Adam to Moses, with the exception of Enoch and Elijah, who, because of their devotion and acknowledgment of the divine head, themselves became prophets of a coming Saviour. He rose by his own power. He conquered death itself, the grave, and the whole powers of humanity.

Jupiter is represented by an old classic writer as saying to the lesser gods that if all of them combined together and should endeavor to throw down his throne—if all power was arrayed against him—he, by his own might, would be able to overcome them all. What was fiction with the ancients becomes gloriously realized in Christ. Take all the powers of humanity—the Jewish power, the Roman power; the power of learning, of art, of public opinion; take all the powers of earth and hell, death and the grave, and combine them all against the Saviour, and, without one effort, without one single apparent movement—the sleeper lies in death, his eyes are sealed, and, as if all unconscious, for the warn-

ing had not been given before—in an instant those eyes were opened, that frame rises, the grave yields up its prey, death retires conquered, and Christ demonstrates himself to be the ruler of the whole universe. He made the earth to tremble, the sun to put on sackcloth, the very air to grow dark, the graves to open, the dead to come forth, and proclaimed himself to be the conqueror of death and hell. So we have proof of his being the Son of God with power.

In that resurrection from the dead we have a pledge of our own resurrection. Christ has become the first fruits of them that slept. You know the figure of the first fruits as understood by the Jews. Their religion was connected with the seasons of the year—with the harvest crops; one of their feasts was called the feast of the first fruits, and was on this wise: When the first heads of grain began to ripen in the field, and there was thus a pledge of harvest, they cut off those first ripened heads and went up to Jerusalem. Before that the grain was not crushed, no bread was baked out of it, and nothing was done to appropriate that crop to man's use until first those ripened heads of grain were brought up to Jerusalem and presented to the Lord as a thank offering. He was acknowledged as Lord of the harvest, and they were laid up as a kind of thank offering before God. They were the first fruits. Then they went away to the fields, and all through Judea the sickle was thrust in, the grain was reaped and gathered into sheaves, and when the harvest was secured they baked the bread for their children out of this first grain. They came up to the temple, where the first fruits had been laid, and they held a feast of thanksgiving, and shouted harvest home. The old harvest feast seems to be descended from this ancient custom. Christ rose as the first fruits, and there is to be a glorious resurrection. Christ came, the first man to rise in this respect, by his own power, from the grave, having snatched the crown from death, having thrown light into the

grave, having himself ascended up toward glory. He goes up in the midst of the shouts of angels; the heavens open before him; yonder is the altar; there is the throne, and around it stand the seraphim and the cherubim; and Christ enters the victor and sits down upon the throne, from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made his footstool. He is the first fruits of the harvest, but the angels are to be sent out like the reapers, and by and by humanity is coming. As Christ, the first fruits, passed through the grave and went up to glory, so there shall come from their sleeping dust in Asia, in Africa, in Europe and in America, from every mountain top, from the depths of the sea, from deep ravines, and from plains outspread—Oh there shall come, in the time of the glorious harvest—the uprising of humanity, when all the nations, waking from their long sleep, shall rise and shall shout the harvest home! Thank God! at that time none shall be wanting. Oh, they come, they come, from the nations of the past and from the generations yet unborn! I see the crowd gathering there. Behold, the angels are waiting, and, as the hosts rise from the dead, they gather round the throne. Christ invites his followers to overcome and sit down with him on his throne, as he overcame and sat down with the Father on his throne. In that is the pledge of our resurrection from the dead. Can I not suffer, since Christ suffered? Can I not die, since Christ died? Let the grave be my resting-place, for Christ rested there. Is it cold? The warmth of his animation is in it. Is it lonely? He shall be beside me in all his spirit's power. Does the load of earth above me, and beneath which I am placed, press upon me? Christ hath power to burst the tomb; he shall burst the tomb, though deep it be, and I shall rise through his almighty power. Yes, let the malice of men be directed against me; let me be taken, if it must be, as a martyr, and be bound to the stake; let the faggots be kindled, let the flame ascend, let my body be burned; gather

my ashes, grind my bones to powder, scatter them on the ocean's surface; or carry those ashes to the top of yonder volcano and throw them within its consuming fire—let them be given to the dust—and yet I can sing:

“God, my Redeemer, lives,  
And ever from the skies  
Looks down and watches all my dust,  
Till he shall bid it rise.”

Thank God! it may be scattered on the wings of the wind—Christ is everywhere present; he has marked every particle, and it shall rise again by his own almighty power. And what is it to sleep awhile, if I am Christ's? To die, if I am like Christ in dying? and be buried, if I am like Christ in being buried? I trust I shall be like him when he comes forth in his glory. I shall be like him, for the Apostle says, We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; we shall be changed from glory into glory, into the same image as by the Spirit of God. It would be a great change to be changed from glory to glory, from saints to angels, from angels to cherubim, from cherubim to seraphim, from glory to glory; but, thank God! we shall not stop being changed; for the change shall go on from glory to glory until we shall be transformed into the likeness of the Son of God, brighter than angels ever shone, more glorious than were ever cherubim. We shall be near the throne; we shall sit beside him, for he hath made room for us there. Then if we can calmly look at death and face him, because his strength has been overcome, it reconciles us to parting a little while with friends. A father or a mother may be taken from us, but we shall see them again; they shall not sleep for ever. The little ones that drop from our arms, we can almost see them this morning; some of us can almost feel them in our arms—can see the glance of that beautiful eye, and hear the sound of that little prattling lip; they seem to be with

us now, as a little while ago they dropped from out of our arms. We followed them to the grave, and we left them there, where the winter's storm has been howling around them. Sometimes loneliness like that terrible storm has swept over our hearts and left them almost in despair; but through Christ's resurrection we see our children yonder in glory, safe in the Saviour's arms. Their little forms shall rise all-glorious from the tomb in the morning of the resurrection; we shall find them, for Jesus is the resurrection and the life. All this comes to us from the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He died once; he dies no more; the condemnation of death is for ever gone; he sits on the throne of everlasting dominion; his kingdom is an eternal kingdom; and as he died once and has risen to die no more, so when we have died once and gone to the grave, and entered the dark valley and shadow of death, and we come up safely on the other side, thank God! death is passed for ever; we shall then put our feet on the neck of the monster, and shall be able to say:

"Oh death, where is thy sting?  
Oh grave, where is thy victory?"

Looking at the resurrection of Christ we exclaim, Thanks be unto God, who hath given us the victory! Such is the eternity of glory and blessedness that awaits us. Thank God for a spiritual body! Here some of us long to triumph over nature. We would grasp, if we could, angelic wisdom; but our brows will ache with pain, our frames decay, our eyes grow dim, our hearing fail. This flesh of ours will not stand hours of painful study and seasons of protracted labor; but, thank God! when the body that now oppresses us is laid in the grave, a spiritual body will be given to us, pure, ethereal, and holy. Oh, what an extent of knowledge shall flash upon us! what light and glory! what spirituality and power! Then we shall not need to ask an angel anything.



We shall know as we are known. Jesus will be our teacher; the Everlasting God, the Man whose name is Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Prince of Peace. He himself shall be our Leader. We shall know then as also we are known.

Then rejoice in God. Dry up those tears. Cast away that downcast look. Child of the dust, you are an heir of glory. There is a crown all burnished for you; there is a mansion all ready for you; there is a white robe prepared for you; there is eternal glory for you; angels are to be your servants, and you are to reign with the King of kings for ever. But while you wait on earth, be witnesses for God; attest the glory of your Master; rise in the greatness of His strength; bind sin captive to your chariot wheels; go onward in your heavenly career, and be as pure as your ascended Head is pure. Be active in works of mercy; be angels of light, be flames of fire; go on your mission of mercy, and convert the world unto God before you go up higher. When you go, not only go forward to present yourselves, but may every one of you be able to say: "Here am I, and those which thou hast given me."

## XLII.

### MESSIAH'S THRONE.

MASON.

[JOHN MITCHELL MASON, D.D., an eloquent divine and theologian of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, was born in New York city, in 1770. After graduating from Columbia College, he continued his theological studies at Edinburgh. In his twenty third-year, he succeeded his father in the pastorate of the Cedar Street Church. He became editor of the "Christian Magazine" in 1807, provost of Columbia College four years later, and president of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1821. Three years later he returned to his native city, where he died in 1829. Among the justly celebrated of his sermons are: "Messiah's Throne," "Gospel for the Poor," "Oration on the Death of Hamilton." The first named was preached before the London Missionary Society in 1802.]

*"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."*—Heb. i. 18.

IN the all-important argument which occupies this epistle, Paul assumes, what the believing Hebrews had already professed, that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah. To prepare them for the consequences of their own principle—a principle involving nothing less than the abolition of their law, the subversion of their state, the ruin of their city, the final extinction of their carnal hopes—he leads them to the doctrine of their Redeemer's person, in order to explain the nature of his offices, to evince the value of his spiritual salvation, and to show, in both, the accomplishment of their economy which was now "ready to vanish away." Under no apprehension of betraying the unwary into idolatrous homage, by giving to the Lord Jesus greater glory than is due unto his name, the apostle sets out with ascribing to him excellence and attributes which belong to no creature. Creatures of most elevated rank are introduced; but it is to display, by contrast, the pre-eminence of Him who is "the

brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Angels are great in might and in dignity; but "unto them hath he not put in subjection the world to come. Unto which of them said he, at any time, Thou art my son?" To which of them, "Sit thou at my right hand." He saith they are spirits, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. But *unto THE SON,*" in a style which annihilates competition and comparison—"unto THE SON, he saith, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*"

Brethren, if the majesty of Jesus is the subject which the Holy Ghost selected for the encouragement and consolation of his people, when he was shaking the earth and the heavens, and diffusing his gospel among the nations, can it be otherwise than suitable and precious to us on this occasion? Shall it not expand our views, and warm our hearts, and nerve our arm in our efforts to exalt his fame? Let me implore, then, the aid of your prayers, but far more importunately the aids of his own Spirit, while I speak of the things which concern THE KING: those great things contained in the text—his personal glory—his sovereign rule.

I. His PERSONAL GLORY shines forth in the name by which he is revealed; a name above every name: "THY throne, O God."

To the single eye nothing can be more evident, in the

*First* place, than that the Holy Ghost here asserts the *essential deity* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of his enemies, whom he will make his footstool, some have, indeed, controverted this position, and endeavored to blot out the text from the catalogue of his witnesses. Instead of "thy throne, O God," they would compel us, by a perversion of phraseology, of figure, and of sense, to read, "God is thy throne;" converting the great and dreadful God into a symbol of authority in one of his own creatures. The Scriptures, it seems, may utter contradictions or impiety, but the divinity

of the Son they shall not attest. The crown, however, which "flourishes on his head," is not to be torn away, nor the anchor of our hope to be wrested from us, by the rude hand of licentious criticism.

I cannot find, in the lively oracles, a single distinctive mark of deity which is not applied, without reserve or limitation, to the only begotten Son. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are his. Who is that mysterious WORD, that was "in the beginning with God?" Who is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty?" Who is he that "knows what is in man," because he searches the deep and dark recesses of the heart? Who is the Omnipresent, that has promised, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" the light of whose countenance is, at the same moment, the joy of heaven and the salvation of earth; who is encircled by the seraphim on high, and "walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks;" who is in this assembly, in all the assemblies of his people, in every worshipping family, in every closet of prayer, in every holy heart? "Whose hands have stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?" Who hath replenished them with inhabitants, and garnished them with beauty, having created all things that are in both, "visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers?" By whom do "all things consist?" Who is the Governor among the nations, "having on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS?" Whom is it the Father's will that "all men should honor even as they honor himself?" Whom has he commanded his angels to worship, whom to obey? Before whom do the devils tremble? Who is qualified to redeem millions of sinners from the wrath to come, and preserve them, by his grace, to his everlasting kingdom? Who raiseth the dead, "having life in himself, to quicken

whom he will," so that at his voice, "all who are in their graves shall come forth," and death and hell surrender their numerous and forgotten captives? Who shall weigh, in the balance of judgment, the destinies of angels and men, dispose of the thrones of paradise, and bestow eternal life? Shall I submit to the decision of reason? Shall I ask a response from heaven? Shall I summon the devils from their chains of darkness? The response from heaven sounds in my ears, reason approves, and the devils confess: This, O Christians, is none other than the GREAT GOD our SAVIOUR.

Indeed, my brethren, the doctrine of our Lord's divinity is not, as a *fact*, more interesting to our faith, than, as a *principle*, it is essential to our hope. If he were not *the true God*, he could not be *eternal life*. When pressed down by guilt, and languishing for happiness, I look around for a deliverer, such as my conscience, and my heart, and the word of God assure me I need, insult not my agony by directing me to a creature—to a man, a mere man like myself. A creature—a man! My Redeemer owns my *person*. My immortal spirit is his *property*. When I come to die, I must commit it into his hands. My soul, my infinitely precious soul, committed to a mere man, become the property of a mere man! I would not thus intrust my *body* to the highest angel who burns in the temple above. It is only the *Father of spirits* that can have *property* in spirits, and be their refuge in the hour of transition from the present to the approaching world. In short, my brethren, the divinity of Jesus is, in the system of grace, the sun to which all its parts are subordinate, and all their stations refer; which binds them in sacred concord, and imparts to them their radiance, and life, and vigor. Take from it this central luminary, and the glory is departed; its holy harmonies are broken; the elements rush to chaos: the light of salvation is extinguished for ever.

But it is not the deity of the Son, simply considered, to which the text confines our attention. We are, in the

*Second* place, to contemplate it as subsisting in a personal union with the human nature.;

Long before this epistle was written had he "by himself purged our sins, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." It is, therefore, as "God manifested in the flesh;" as my own brother, while he is the express image of the Father's person; as the Mediator of the new covenant, that he is seated on the throne. Of this throne, to which the pretensions of a creature were mad and blasphemous, the majesty is, indeed, maintained by his divine power; but the foundation is laid in his mediatorial character. I need not prove to this audience, that all his gracious offices and all his redeeming work originated in the love and the election of his Father. Obedient to that will, which fully accorded with his own, he came down from heaven; tabernacled in our clay; was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; submitted to the contradictions of sinners, the temptations of the old serpent, and the wrath of an avenging God. In the merit of his obedience, which threw a lustre round the divine law, and in the atonement of his death, by which "he offered himself a sacrifice without spot unto God," repairing the injuries of man's rebellion, expiating sin through the blood of his cross, and conciliating its pardon with infinite purity and unalterable truth: summarily, in his performing those conditions on which were suspended all God's mercy to man and all man's enjoyment of God—in these stupendous "works of righteousness" are we to look for the cause of his present glory. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue

should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Exalted thus to be a Prince and a Saviour, he fills heaven with his beauty, and obtains from its blest inhabitants the purest and most reverential praise. "Worthy," cry the mingled voices of his angels and his redeemed, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." "Worthy," again cry his redeemed, in a song which belongs not to the angels, but in which, with holy ecstasy, we will join, "worthy art thou, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

Delightful, brethren, transcendently delightful were it to dwell upon this theme. But we must refrain; and having taken a transient glance at our Redeemer's personal glory, let us turn to the

II. View which the text exhibits—the view of his SOVEREIGN RULE: "Thy THRONE, O God, is for ever and ever."

The mediatorial kingdom of Christ Jesus, directed and upheld by his divinity, is now the object of our contemplation. To advance Jehovah's glory in the salvation of men, is the purpose of its erection. Though earth is the scene, and human life the limit, of those great operations by which they are interested in its mercies and prepared for its consummation, its principles, its provisions, its issues, are eternal. When it rises up before us in all its grandeur of design, collecting and conducting to the heavens of God millions of immortals, in comparison with the least of whom the destruction of the material universe were a thing of nought, whatever the carnal mind calls vast and magnificent shrinks away into nothing.

But it is not so much the nature of Messiah's kingdom on which I am to insist, as its *stability*, its *administration*, and the *prospects* which they open to the church of God.

Messiah's throne is not one of those airy fabrics which

are reared by vanity and overthrown by time : it is fixed of old ; it is STABLE, and cannot be shaken, for,

1. It is the throne of God. He who sitteth on it is the Omnipotent. Universal being is in his hand. Revolution, force, fear, as applied to his kingdom, are words without meaning. Rise up in rebellion, if thou hast courage. Associate with thee the whole mass of infernal power. Begin with the ruin of whatever is fair and good in this little globe. Pass hence to pluck the sun out of his place, and roll the volume of desolation through the starry world. What hast thou done unto him ? It is the puny menace of a worm against Him whose frown is perdition. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh."

2. With the stability which Messiah's Godhead communicates to his throne, let us connect the stability resulting from *his Father's covenant*.

His throne is founded not merely in strength, but in right. God hath laid the government upon the shoulder of his holy child Jesus, and set him upon mount Zion as his king for ever. He has promised and sworn to build up his throne to all generations ; to make it endure as the days of heaven ; to beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. "But my faithfulness," adds he, "and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. Hath he said it, and will he not do it ? Hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass ?" Whatever disappointments rebuke the visionary projects of men, or the more crafty schemes of Satan, "the counsel of the Lord, *that shall stand*." The blood of sprinkling, which sealed all the promises made to Messiah, and binds down his Father's faithfulness to their accomplishment, witnesses continually in the heavenly sanctuary. "He must," therefore, "reign till he have put all his enemies under his feet." And although the dispensation of his authority shall, upon this event, be changed, and he shall deliver it up, in



its present form, to the Father, he shall still remain, in his substantial glory, a Priest upon his throne, to be the eternal bond of our union, and the eternal medium of our fellowship with the living God.

Seeing that the throne of our King is as immovable as it is exalted, let us with joy draw water out of that well of salvation which is opened to us in the ADMINISTRATION of his kingdom. Here we must consider its general characters, and the means by which it operates.

The *general characters* which I shall illustrate are the following:

I. *Mystery*. He is the unsearchable God, and his government must be like himself. *Facts* concerning both, he has graciously revealed. These we must admit upon the credit of his own testimony; with these we must satisfy our wishes and limit our inquiry. To intrude into those things which he hath not seen because God has not disclosed them, whether they relate to his arrangements for this world or the next, is the arrogance of one vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. There are secrets in our Lord's procedure which he will not explain to us in this life, and which may not perhaps be explained in the life to come. We cannot tell how he makes evil the minister of good; how he combines physical and moral agencies of different kind and order, in the production of blessings. We cannot so much as conjecture what bearings the system of redemption, in every part of its process, may have upon the relations of the universe; nor even what may be all the connections of providence in the occurrences of this moment, or of the last. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: it is high, we cannot attain it. Our Sovereign's way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters; and his footsteps are not known." When, therefore, we are surrounded with difficulty, when we cannot unriddle his conduct in particular dispensations, we must remember that he is God—that we

are to "walk by faith;" and to trust him as implicitly when we are in the valley of the shadow of death, as when his candle shines upon our heads. We must remember that it is not for us to be admitted into the cabinet of the King of kings; that creatures constituted as we are could not sustain the view of his unveiled agency; that it would confound, and scatter, and annihilate our little intellects. As often, then, as he retires from our observation, blending goodness with majesty, let us lay our hands upon our mouths and worship. This stateliness of our King can afford us no just ground of uneasiness. On the contrary, it contributes to our tranquillity; for we know,

2. That if his administration is mysterious, it is also *wise*. "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." That infinite understanding watches over, and arranges, and directs all the affairs of his church and of the world. We are perplexed at every step, embarrassed by opposition, lost in confusion, fretted by disappointment, and ready to conclude, in our haste, that all things are against our own good and our Master's honor. But "this is our infirmity;" it is the dictate of impatience and indiscretion. We forget the "years of the right hand of the Most High." We are slow of heart in learning a lesson which shall soothe our spirits at the expense of our pride. We turn away from the consolation to be derived from believing that though we know not the connections and results of holy providence, our Lord Jesus knows them perfectly. With him there is no irregularity, no chance, no conjecture. Disposed before his eye in the most luminous and exquisite order, the whole series of events occupy the very place and crisis where they are most effectually to subserve the purposes of his love. Not a moment of time is wasted, nor a fragment of action misapplied. What he does, we do not indeed know at present, but, as far as we shall be permitted to know hereafter, we shall see that his most inscrutable procedure was guided

by consummate wisdom; that our choice was often as foolish as our petulance was provoking; that the success of our own wishes would have been our most painful chastisement, would have diminished our happiness, and detracted from his praise. Let us study, therefore, brethren, to subject our ignorance to his knowledge; instead of prescribing, to obey; instead of questioning, to believe: to perform our part without that despondency which betrays a fear that our Lord may neglect his, and tacitly accuses him of a less concern than we feel for the glory of his own name. Let us not shrink from this duty as imposing too rigorous a condition upon our obedience; for a

Third character of Messiah's administration is *righteousness*. "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre." If "clouds and darkness are around about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." In the times of old, his redeemed "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; but, nevertheless, he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." He loves his church and the members of it too tenderly to lay upon them any burdens, or expose them to any trials, which are not indispensable to their good. It is right for them to go through fire and through water, that he may bring them out into a wealthy place—right to endure chastening, that they may be partakers of his holiness—right to have the sentence of death in themselves, that they may trust in the living God, and that his strength may be perfect in their weakness. It is right that he should endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; that he should permit iniquity to abound, the love of many to wax cold, and the dangers of his church to accumulate, till the interposition of his arm be necessary and decisive. In the day of final retribution, not one mouth shall be opened to complain of injustice. It will be seen that the Judge of all the earth has done right; that the works of his hands have

been verity and judgment; and done, every one of them, in truth and uprightness. Let us then think not only respectfully but reverently of his dispensations, repress the voice of murmur, and rebuke the spirit of discontent; wait, in faith and patience, till he become his own interpreter, when "the heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory."

You will anticipate me in enumerating the *means* which Messiah employs in the administration of his kingdom.

1. The *Gospel*, of which himself, as an all-sufficient and condescending Saviour, is the great and affecting theme. Derided by the world, it is, nevertheless, effectual to the salvation of them who believe. "We preach Christ crucified: to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The doctrine of the cross connected with evangelical ordinances—the ministry of reconciliation; the holy Sabbath; the sacraments of his covenant: briefly, the whole system of instituted worship—is the *rod of the Redeemer's strength*, by which he subdues sinners to himself, rules even in the midst of his enemies, exercises his glorious authority in his church, and exhibits a visible proof to men and angels that he is King in Zion.

2. The efficient means to which the Gospel owes its success, and the name of Jesus its praise, is, the *agency of the Holy Ghost*.

Christianity is the *ministration of the Spirit*. All real and sanctifying knowledge of the truth and love of God is from his inspiration. It was the last and best promise which the Saviour made to his afflicted disciples at the moment of parting, "I will send the *Comforter*, the Spirit of truth; he shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." It is he who convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: who infuses

resistless vigor into means otherwise weak and useless. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, God the Spirit, to the pulling down of strongholds. Without his benediction, the ministry of an arch angel would never convert one sinner from the error of his way. But when he descends, with his life-giving influence from God out of heaven, then "foolish things of the world confound the wise; and weak things of the world confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, bring to nought things which are." It is this ministration of the Spirit which renders the preaching of the Gospel to men dead in trespasses and sins a reasonable service. When I am set down in the valley of vision, and view the bones, very many and very dry, and am desired to try the effect of my own ability in recalling them to life, I will fold my hands and stand mute in astonishment and despair. But when the Lord God commands me to speak in HIS name, my closed lips shall be opened: when he calls upon the breath from the four winds to breathe upon the slain that they may live, I will prophesy without fear, "Oh ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord;" and, obedient to his voice, they shall come together, bone to his bone—shall be covered with sinews and flesh—shall receive new life, and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. In this manner, from the graves of nature, and the dry bones of natural men, does the Holy Spirit recruit the "armies of the living God," and make them, collectively and individually, a name, and a praise, and a glory, to the Captain of their salvation.

3. Among the instruments which the Lord Jesus employs in the administration of his government, are *the resources of the physical and moral world.*

Supreme in heaven and in earth, "upholding all things by the word of his power," the universe is his magazine of

means. Nothing which acts or exists, is exempted from promoting in its own place the purposes of his kingdom. Beings rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; the heavens above, and the earth below; the obedience of sanctified, and the disobedience of unsanctified men; all holy spirits; all damned spirits: in one word, every agency, every element, every atom, are but the ministers of his will, and concur in the execution of his designs. And this he will demonstrate to the confusion of his enemies, and the joy of his people, in that great and terrible day when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and dispense ultimate judgment to the quick and the dead.

Upon these hills of holiness, the stability of Messiah's throne, and the perfect administration of his kingdom, let us take our station, and survey the PROSPECTS which rise up before the church of God.

When I look upon the magnificent scene, I cannot repress the salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favored!" She has the prospect of preservation, of increase, and of triumph.

1. The prospect of *preservation*.

The long existence of the Christian church would be pronounced, upon common principles of reasoning, impossible. She finds in every man a natural and inveterate enemy. To encounter and overcome the unanimous hostility of the world, she boasts no political stratagem, no disciplined legions, no outward coercion of any kind. Yet her expectation is, that she shall live for ever. To mock this hope, and blot out her memorial from under heaven, the most furious efforts of fanaticism, the most ingenious arts of statesmen, the concentrated strength of empires, have been frequently and perseveringly applied. The blood of her sons and her daughters has streamed like water; the smoke of the scaffold and the stake, where they won the crown of martyrdom in the cause of Jesus, has ascended in thick volumes to the skies. The

tribes of persecutors have sported over her woes, and erected monuments, as they imagined, of her perpetual ruin. But where are her tyrants, and where their empires? The tyrants have long since gone to their own place; their names have descended upon the roll of infamy; their empires have passed, like shadows over the rock—they have successively disappeared, and left not a trace behind.

But what became of the Church? She rose from her ashes fresh in beauty and in might. Celestial glory beamed around her; she dashed down the monumental marble of her foes, and they who hated her fled before her. She has celebrated the funeral of kings and kingdoms that plotted her destruction; and, with the inscriptions of their pride, has transmitted to posterity the record of their shame. How shall this phenomenon be explained? We are, at the present moment, witnesses of the fact; but who can unfold the mystery? This blessed book, the book of truth and life, has made our wonder to cease. **THE LORD HER GOD IN THE MIDST OF HER IS MIGHTY.** His presence is a fountain of health, and his protection a *wall of fire*. He has betrothed her, in eternal covenant, to himself. Her living Head, in whom she lives, is above, and his quickening Spirit shall never depart from her. Armed with divine virtue, his Gospel, secret, silent, unobserved, enters the hearts of men and sets up an everlasting kingdom. It eludes all the vigilance, and baffles all the power of the adversary. Bars and bolts, and dungeons are no obstacle to its approach. Bonds, and tortures, and death cannot extinguish its influence. Let no man's heart tremble, then, because of fear. Let no man despair, in these days of rebuke and blasphemy, of the Christian cause. The ark is launched, indeed, upon the floods; the tempest sweeps along the deep; the billows break over her on every side. But Jehovah-Jesus has promised to conduct her in safety to the haven of peace. She cannot be lost unless the Pilot perish. Why, then, do the heathen

rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? Hear, O Zion, the word of thy God, and rejoice for the consolation. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Mere preservation, however, though a most comfortable, is not the only hope of the church; she has

2. The prospect of *increase*.

Increase—from an effectual blessing upon the means of grace in places where they are already enjoyed; for thus saith the Lord, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses."

Increase—from the diffusion of evangelical truth through pagan lands. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be-nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thy heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

Increase—from the recovery of the rejected Jews to the faith and privileges of God's dear children. Blindness in part has happened unto Israel; they have been cut off, for their unbelief, from the olive-tree. Age has followed age, and they remain to this hour, spread over the face of the earth, a fearful and affecting testimony to the truth of God's word. They are without their sanctuary, without their



Messiah, without the hope of their believing ancestors. But it shall not be always thus. They are still "beloved for the fathers' sake." When the "fullness of the Gentiles shall come in," they too shall be gathered. They shall discover, in our Jesus, the marks of the promised Messiah; and with tenderness proportioned to their former insensibility, shall cling to his cross. Grafted again into their own olive-tree, all Israel shall be saved. It was through their fall that salvation came unto us Gentiles. And "if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" What ecstasy, my brethren! the Gentile and the Jew taking sweet counsel together, and going to the house of God in company: the path of the swift messenger of grace marked in every direction, by the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ—a nation born at once—the children of Zion exclaiming, "The place is too strait for me: give place to me, that I may dwell;" the knowledge of Jehovah overspreading the earth as the waters cover the sea; and all flesh enjoying the salvation of God. This faith ushers in a

Third prospect of the church—the prospect of *triumph*.

Though often desolate and afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, the Lord her God will then make her "an eternal excellency," and repay her sorrows with triumph.

Triumph—in complete victory over the enemies who sought her hurt. "The nation and kingdom," saith the Lord, "that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." That great enemy of her purity and her peace, who shed the blood of her saints and her prophets, the *Man of Sin*, "who has exalted him-

self above all that is called God," shall appear, in the whole horror of his doom as the "son of perdition, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." The terrible but joyous event shall be announced by an angel from heaven crying mightily with a strong voice, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" "ALLELUIA," shall be the response of the church universal: "Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." Then too, the accuser of the brethren, that old serpent which is the devil, shall be cast down, and bound a thousand years, that he shall deceive the nations no more. This will introduce the church's

Triumph—in the prevalence of righteousness and peace throughout the world.

Her people shall be all righteous. The voice of the blasphemer shall no longer insult her ear. Iniquity, as ashamed, shall stop its mouth and hide its head. All her officers shall be peace, and all her exactors righteousness. The kings of the earth, bringing their glory and honor unto her, shall accomplish the gracious promise: "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness." Her Prince, whose throne is for ever and ever, "shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Every man shall meet, in every other man, a brother without dissimulation. Fear and the sword shall be far away: "they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." For thus saith the Lord, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy

land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

Triumph—in the presence of God, in the communion of his love, and the signal manifestation of his glory. "Behold, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Then shall be seen the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, which "shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it; and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Such, according to the sure word of prophecy, will be the triumphs of Christianity; and to this issue all scriptural efforts to evangelize the heathen contribute their share. That mind is profane, indeed, which repels the sentiment of awe; and hard is the heart which feels no bland emotion. But let us pause. You exult, perhaps, in the view of that happiness which is reserved for the human race; you long for its arrival, and are eager, in your place, to help on the gracious work. It is well. But are there no heathen among us? Are there none who, in the midst of their zeal for foreign missions, forget their own souls; nor consider that they themselves *neglect the great salvation*? Remember, that a man may be active in measures which shall subserve the conversion of others, and yet perish in his own iniquity. That very gospel which you desire to send to the heathen, must be the gospel of *your* salvation: it must turn you from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; it must make you meet for the inheritance of the saints, or it shall fearfully aggravate your condemnation at

last. You pray, "Thy kingdom come." But is the "kingdom of God within you?" Is the Lord Jesus "in you the hope of glory?" Be not deceived. The *name* of Christian will not save you. Better had it been for you not to have known the way of righteousness; better to have been the most idolatrous pagan; better, infinitely better, not to have been born, than to die strangers to the pardon of the Redeemer's blood, and the sanctifying virtue of his Spirit. From his throne on high he calls—calls to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

On the other hand, such as have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them, are commanded to be *joyful in their King*. He reigns, O believer, for thee. The stability of his throne is thy safety. The administration of his government is for thy good; and the precious pledge is, that he "will perfect that which concerneth thee." In all thy troubles, and in all thy joy, commit thy way unto him. He will guard the sacred deposit. Fear not that thou shalt lack any good thing. Fear not that thou shalt be forsaken. Fear not that thou shalt fall beneath the arm of the oppressor. "He went through the fires of the pit to *save* thee; and he will stake all the glories of his crown to *keep* thee." Sing, then, thou beloved, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."

And if we have "tasted that he is gracious;" if we look back with horror and transport upon the wretchedness and the wrath which we have escaped, with what anxiety shall we not hasten to the aid of our fellow-men, who are sitting in "the region and shadow of death." What zeal will be

too ardent, what labor too persevering, what sacrifice too costly, if, by any means, we may tell them of Jesus, and the resurrection, and the life eternal? Who shall be daunted by difficulties, or deterred by discouragement? If but one pagan should be brought, savingly, by your instrumentality, to the knowledge of God, and the kingdom of heaven, will you not have an ample recompense? Is there here a man who would give up all for lost because some favorite hope has been disappointed, or who regrets the worldly substance which he has expended on so divine an enterprise? Shame on thy coward spirit and thine avaricious heart! Do the holy Scriptures, does the experience of ages, does the nature of things justify the expectation, that we shall carry war into the central regions of delusion and crime, without opposition, without trial? Show me a plan which encounters not fierce resistance from the prince of darkness and his allies in the human heart, and I will show you a plan which never came from the inspiration of God. If missionary effort suffer occasional embarrassment; if impressions on the heathen be less speedy, and powerful, and extensive than fond wishes have anticipated; if particular parts of the great system of operation be, at times, disconcerted; if any of the *ministers of grace* fall a sacrifice to the violence of those whom they go to bless in the name of the Lord—these are events which ought to exercise our faith and patience, to wean us from self-sufficiency, to teach us where our strength lies, and where our dependence must be fixed; but not to enfeeble hope nor relax diligence. Let us not “despise the day of small things.” Let us not overlook, as an important matter, the *very existence* of that missionary spirit which has already awakened Christians in different countries from their long and dishonorable slumbers, and bids fair to produce, in due season, a *general movement of the church upon earth*. Let us not, for one instant, harbor the ungracious thought, that the prayers, and tears, and wrestlings of those who make mention of the Lord.

form no link in that vast chain of events by which he "will establish, and will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." That dispensation which is most repulsive to flesh and blood, the violent death of faithful missionaries, should animate Christians with new resolution. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The cry of martyred blood ascends the heavens: it enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. It will give him no rest till he rain down righteousness upon the land where it has been shed, and which it has sealed as a future conquest for Him who "in his majesty rides prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness."

For the world, indeed, and perhaps for the church, many calamities and trials are in store, before the glory of the Lord shall be so revealed that all flesh shall see it together. "I will shake all nations," is the divine declaration—"I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come." The vials of wrath which are now running, and others which remain to be poured out, must be exhausted. The "supper of the great God" must be prepared, and his "strange work" have its course. Yet the missionary cause must ultimately succeed. It is the cause of God, and *shall* prevail. The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on, when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the continent; when the Thames and the Danube, when the Tiber and the Rhine, shall call upon Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, Alleluia, salvation! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Comfort one another with this faith, and with these words.

Now, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY. AMEN AND AMEN."

### XLIII.

#### THE GAIN OF GODLINESS.

AMES.

[EDWARD RAYMOND AMES, D. D., LL. D., a sagacious and pure-spirited Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was born at Athens, Ohio, in 1806. He studied at the Ohio University, and was licensed to preach by the Illinois Conference in his twenty-fifth year. In 1852 he was elected to the episcopate. For the past ten years, he has resided in Baltimore. His character is marked by earnestness, consistency, self-consecration, statesman-like breadth of view, and a vital vigor which gives freshness, ardor, and passionateness of feeling to his declarations of free salvation by the Gospel. This Sermon was preached in the Foundry Church, Washington, D. C., January 1869, and is reprinted from a phonographic report for "The Methodist."]

*"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."*—1 Timothy iv. 8.

THE term "godliness" is sometimes used in a much more restricted sense than it is in the text. The apostle Peter, writing to Christians, says: "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness." Evidently taken in this connection, the term applies to a particular Christian grace—an element in individual Christian character; but in the letter of which our text forms a part, it is used in a much broader and more extended sense. In a paragraph preceding the text, the apostle employs the term thus: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." Under this term, "mystery of godliness," he comprises six great facts of revealed Christianity, and the term godliness embraces them all. The first fact is the manifestation of God in the flesh, "God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the spirit." That is, both the spirit of

prophecy and the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit bearing witness to the fact that Christ was a manifestation of God in the flesh. "Seen of angels," for angels ministered to him, recognising him as divine, as God manifest in the flesh: "Preached unto the gentiles." Here we have the subject of apostolic preaching. This was the great theme of their ministry—that God was manifest in the flesh. Paul says: "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Believed on in the world." This was the primitive confession of faith, and is still the peculiar faith of Christians, that God was manifest in the flesh.

When the eunuch demanded of Philip why he should not be baptized, the eunuch being already a proselyte of the *Gate*, one who believed in the unity of the Godhead, but who did not accept the ritualistic services of the Mosaic law, Philip said unto him: "If thou believest that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, thou mayest." That was all that was necessary to make him a Trinitarian, for he believed in God the Father; and he said: "I believe."

The Bible fixes definitely the meaning of the phrase, "Son of God." On the records of a court holding such a trial as never has and never will be held again, when the prisoner at the bar was charged with blasphemy, this was the general charge, and the specification under it was that he called himself the Son of God in a peculiar sense, "thereby," said the count, "making himself equal with God;" using the term "Son of God" in such a sense as to claim equality with the Father. And when questioned, "Art thou the Son of God?" Paul says he witnessed a good confession on that occasion. I have thanked my God upon my knees a thousand times for the two little words that fell from the Saviour's lips, and I expect to adore and bless him in eternity for them. He had heard the charges



and the specification under the charges, and when interrogated, "Art thou the Son of God?" he said: "I am." What said his accusers? "What need we any further testimony? Ye yourselves have heard his blasphemy." On that charge he was convicted and executed; and they that deny his divinity take the other alternative necessarily, and say he died justly as a malefactor under the Jewish law, by the terms of which blasphemy was a capital offence. "Believed on in the world, and received up into glory." The Incarnate Son of God is now King of kings and Lord of lords on high.

Now, this is a synopsis of revealed religion. This is not the testimony of the rocks which some claim to preach, however valuable that may be in its place; but in the pulpit and in the house of God, the testimony of Jesus takes precedence of all other. With this passage before us in immediate connection with the one we have read, of course we can affix but one meaning to the term godliness in the text, of which the affirmation is that it is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. The apostle asserts that bodily exercise profiteth little. Not that there is no profit or no advantage in those secular pursuits that pertain mainly or altogether to this life, which, however successful such enterprises, can profit except for a little time. If you ask the general at the head of his conquering legions where he is marching with all his host, he will tell you that he shall rendezvous in the grave, and that the laurels with which you twine his brow will suddenly perish. Ask the statesman who seeks to impress his name upon the page of history, and to leave behind him a good record, and he will tell you that his destination is the grave. Ask the man of commerce what he hopes to gain by all his argosies, by his rich ventures to distant ports, with returned cargoes still richer, and he will tell you the end of all is the grave. It profiteth but for a little time.

All these things perish with the using; but we have the verdict of inspiration, for which we most heartily thank God, that there is left to man on this side of the grave one object of pursuit that does not perish in the grave.

The apostle tells us in the text that this system of faith and morals which is inculcated in our holy books is a link that binds together time and eternity; that it has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. The interests cherished by the Christian on earth do not perish with his body, when it is entombed in the grave. Then is the sequence to the labors of earth. An old Puritan divine said truly and aptly, that grace was glory in the body. I cannot sympathize with those Christians who expect such profound astonishment in reaching that better land. It is only a little more of the same kind—that is all; it differs in degree, and not in kind. He who has the kingdom of God formed within him on earth will not, I take it, be greatly astonished when he becomes a citizen of the kingdom of heaven; it will be only a continuance of the employment which has been his chief business on earth.

It is asserted of this system of faith and morals that it is profitable, and that it is useful; and I know of no better way to commend the great interests of Christian missions to a sensible audience than to show them that the religion which they propose to propagate is a good, practical, and useful thing. This would be proper before any audience of Christians in any land; but it has special emphasis when addressed to an audience of American Christians; for the temper of our community in this country, to a greater extent than any other, is to ask first after the utility of a thing. The mere abstract truth does not satisfy us so much as the usefulness of a thing. It is a common by-word, "Will it pay?" And before you can hope greatly to interest an intelligent people in prosecuting an enterprise, it is but right that you should show them that it is a good

thing, that it bears good fruit, and that it accomplishes a good purpose.

Mark the language of the apostle. He says of this that it is a promise. We go back two thousand years, and we remember that Christianity was nothing but promise then. It had done nothing; it had accomplished no triumphs, it had gathered no laurels of victory. No gorgeous temples sprung up upon its pathway, and no benevolent or literary institutions grew up under the preaching of the apostles. Their great mission and their only object was to plant truth in human intellects, and bind it upon human consciences, leaving it to bring forth in coming ages its appropriate humanitarian results. All this was high-sounding promise to be uttered by such a creed, for this Christianity was the latest form of heresy. The few who embraced it were everywhere spoken against. No other religion made such promises. Judaism never professed that its mission was to convert the world to its faith. There was a little circle of light that shined around Jewish altars, but if you went beyond that circle you were stumbling amidst heathen gods and heathen temples. The philosophers of Greece never anticipated or professed to believe that their creed was one that would be accepted by the multitude; they did not deal with the multitude, they ignored and despised them, but Plato gathered around him his select few to indoctrinate them with the principles of his philosophy, never intending that the great mass of humanity should receive the leaven.

The same was true of all ancient philosophic sects; none of them ever looked out upon the vast prospect of a lost world: and it was singular that this man Jesus, this God-Man, reared amidst the toil of an humble craft, should seize the Godlike and magnificent plan of lifting up a lost race, and bringing them to a higher level, into communion with their God; to bring back the one that had wandered most widely from the path of duty, whose soul was as black with

sin as the tents of Kedar, and set him down in meekness and docility at the feet of the great Teacher, successfully to learn and practise the lessons of salvation. "Profitable unto all things;" and it is no mean evidence that our religion is true that it embraces in itself all these multiplied advantages which connect themselves with it. Many who have written on the evidences of Christianity have noted and placed special emphasis upon the value of the testimony arising out of those analogies which exist between natural laws and moral laws, and we see a most striking analogy cropping out here and there all over this interesting and profitable field of Christian investigation, and nowhere else do we see it more strongly than in the multiplied and diversified benefits which flow from the propagation of Christianity as a system.

If we look into the constitution of the natural world, we find that God has impressed one great law upon matter—the law of mutual dependence, which runs through all material and all spiritual beings. From the minutest atom that floats in the sunbeam, up to the most towering archangel that bends before the throne of God, all come under this law of reciprocal or mutual influence. As you see the law of gravitation, which adapts itself to the management of the least atom, and puts forth a controlling energy when it lays its grasp upon the whole system of planetary worlds, so, when you look into God's moral law, you find that it impresses itself upon all intellects, whether angelic or human, as I judge; for I imagine that all angelic beings are bound to love God just as you and I. I imagine that all the heavenly host have need of faith just as much as we have, for whatever appertains to the Infinite must always be matter of faith to the finite. They must believe in Christ as we do, for superior knowledge banishes many things that give us doubt and trouble; but, so far as the Infinite is concerned, I judge that angels and men all come under this

great spiritual law of divine love and mutual faith in the great Eternal. I judge that from the analogy and philosophy of nature and the fitness of things; but I should not preach it unless I had a "thus saith the Lord" for it. The author of our text says in another letter of Jesus Christ, "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." All these spiritual intelligences are a part of the grand household; they are our folks; they have passed from our department of the dwelling. Some of them never occupied the habitation that we do, but they are now in a dwelling where some of our friends have gone, and where all of us who take a part in the first resurrection shall go, and there will be a union on high. "Profitable unto all things, having the promise."

Now, I thank God we stand upon an elevation of two thousand years; we look back across the track of the departed ages, and we are prepared to say this morning that our religion is no longer of promise. It has been busy in achieving glorious victories for two thousand years, and time, that weakens other things, only adds to its strength and power. Although the frosts of twenty centuries have gathered upon its head, there are no gray hairs around the temples of the Church; she is still in the vigor of her youth. God has invested piety with immortality on this side of the grave, and the Church, with augmented power, goes forth from conquering to conquest, being well satisfied that it is not a vain thing to serve God—that, in promoting Christianity, we are promoting the very best interests of men for time and for eternity. I would not be misunderstood, however, in explaining the meaning of the word profit or advantage, as implying that there was a mercenary motive. I simply mean that God has indissolubly linked together man's duties and man's interests.

I utterly deny that, taken in the broadest and justest sense, Christianity demands any sacrifices. She pays all

expenses, and leaves a large margin of profit. We may count them sacrifices in our short-sightedness, but whatever God commands you and me to do, it is our interest to do it; we shall not be the losers in the long run. The books that are kept up there will strike the balance on the right side of the ledger; and when the books are opened, and you and I stand before our God to render an account of our stewardship here on earth, that which we counted a sacrifice will be found then to have been a most profitable investment; that little portion of our worldly wealth which we say we gave away for the cause of God and humanity, will then be found the only portion that we took with us. If an old heathen could say on his death-bed that he had lost everything he had except what he had given away, how much more truly can an enlightened Christian feel that all his wise investments made to promote the cause of God and humanity is only so much placed at interest in time, the advantage of which will be reaped in eternity. But how?

We sometimes take a great deal too much for granted in the pulpit.

I doubt whether you or I, after most patient and careful thought, can appreciate at their full value the blessings which we enjoy through Christianity. We have grown up under its influence. Our fathers and mothers bore us to the house of God when we were too feeble to walk there; and the fondest reminiscences of our childhood are mingled with the memory of scenes that occurred around God's altars and sacramental tables. We have not the benefit of contrast. We cannot well appreciate the vast difference between Christianity and paganism, or any form of false religion. Our Saviour taught what I understand the apostle to teach here, when he said, right at the entrance on the heavenly walk: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added." The incidental benefits of Christianity are greater than the

direct benefits promised by any other, or all other, systems of religion. And, now that we may do justice to ourselves and to the lesson of the text, let us ask where Christianity commences the bestowment of its blessings? There are those who seem to think that the great mission of Jesus Christ on earth was to establish a close corporation, and that no man can get into it except through a specified channel—through a particular door of which they hold the key, and which, if they please, they can padlock. I say, out upon so vile a slander against Christ and Christianity! I understand that our blessed Lord, when he took part of our nature, made provision for the salvation of all human beings on the simple condition of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ; and when we speak of the advantages of Christianity, we do not confine them to the Church, whose ministers claim, with great arrogance, to be successors of the apostles. Although hands may have been laid upon heads that contain no brains, setting apart hearts that contain less grace, we understand that Christ meant to teach that salvation was placed within the reach of every true penitent—every man and woman who honestly, before God, is sorry for sin, and will trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

I thank God that is my creed, and I take it from the Bible. I am glad to see an organized Church; but I am far from believing that the only true worshippers of Christ are they who worship in costly temples. There are as true churches in poor log-cabins as there are in the proudest cathedrals. How does Christ commence this great work of elevating and profiting mankind? He commences it in the heart; not by certain outside forms and external ceremonies—not by putting up the scaffolding without the building: the kingdom of God is within us, and it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. He begins this at the right time. Mohammed said that a drop of blood spilt in battle, or a night spent in watching on the tented plain, was

of more avail in securing the joys of Paradise than months of prayer and fasting. His creed aimed to make soldiers; his faith has been propagated at the point of the spear and the edge of the cimeter, and to this day, when heresy breaks out among Moslem, they send armed men to make short work of the heretics, by cutting off their heads. There is no moral suasion in the *Koran*. Now, there are just two agencies, and only two, that govern men—the Bible and the bayonet—that is, moral or physical power; and for myself, I declare, upon all occasions, I advocate the Bible instead of the bayonet; I advocate God's method, and only submit to the other where I must needs submit.

How differently does Christ commence this great work! How different the teachings of our Lord from those of the false prophet! Christ says: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." O if the Church had listened to the teachings of the Saviour eighteen hundred years ago, and understood the deep and heavenly philosophy of the lesson, how different would have been the attitude and perceptions of Christianity in 1869 from what they are! We deal too much with grown-up sinners; yet I thank God that, in this great Protestant Republic, there are several millions of children in the Sabbath school. I look to them with more confidence than I do to Congress. Whilst I do honor to the men who make the laws of the nation, I know right well that, in order to have good laws, there must be something behind the men that make them. There has got to be a power, as the sailors say, to shore them up. Christ begins by planting in the soil of the faithful heart the seeds of truth and righteousness, which grow and strengthen with the growth of the recipient, until, in manhood, they overspread, adorn, and beautify the whole moral character. I am aware that this makes no great display, and that, with our innate littleness, we are apt to pass it by because of its



simplicity, as not worthy of special mention. There has always been a great desire on the part of the Church to put Saul's armor on David—to make the kingdom of Christ consist in outside adornment rather than in spiritual power and moral purity.

I grant that you may take Christian duties in detail, and make them look contemptible. I grant that there are some Christians who beggar their souls, and rob themselves of all spiritual comfort by this process. As an old pastor, I have found them in the Church over which I have had to watch; they were good, upright, moral men. When I have sought to bring them to the prayer-meeting, they had not time to go there, but they "loved the Church." When I wanted a teacher in the Sabbath school, they could not serve me, but they "loved the Church." When I wanted aid to plant missions, they could not help me, but they hoped that Christianity would conquer the world. It is an easy matter for Christians to destroy all their vitality and religious power by neglecting certain religious duties. A man might say, "That star is a little thing, it is a single beam of light, and does so little toward dispelling the darkness, we may safely blot it from the firmament;" and yet, if you repeat that blotting-out process in detail, you will clothe the heavens in sackcloth and plunge the earth in eternal night. That is not a safe way to deal with moral and religious interests, nor, indeed, with other matters. The man who passes through Western valleys will occasionally find a little rivulet murmuring. It scatters verdure along its dewy course; the flowers bloom more brightly and the grass looks greener. But he says: "It is a little thing, and I will dry it up." Let him make a circuit of the mighty basin, and the result of this drying-up process of the little rivulets will be that the great Father of Waters will disappear, and no longer roll its mighty tribute back to the bosom of old ocean. It is not a safe way to deal with God and ourselves to belittle

each particular duty, and at the same time think we can be religious in general without attending to the details.

Christianity begins its work, then, in the heart, and if we use proper diligence, it will begin its work in the heart in infancy. I once heard a man say that Christianity was a system of restraints. I pity his theology and experience. It went upon the supposition that, for the sake of consistency, the man having made a profession of faith in Christ, he would avoid open and flagrant sins; although his heart loved them as well as ever, yet he would be restrained from the commission of them. I do not so understand our religion, brethren. I understand that the grace of Christ in human souls, in the language of the old Puritans, takes away the bent to sinning. The man does not refrain from drunkenness when he would like to be a drunkard, but he has found a more excellent way. He does not cease from blasphemy when he would like to blaspheme, but he has found a better way. He loves a different course, nor does he follow it by constraint, but willingly and of choice. He likes the assembly and association of God's people. Religion, as I have said, begins in the heart. It has but one beginning-place, whether it be with the Caucasian, Hindoo, or African. It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

But what has Christianity done for us socially? Do you know, my brethren, that home is a baptized word, that it was coined in the sanctuary, and that Christianity is the only system that gives to man a home? Would we accept the Hindoo's home? would we call that home? No. Would we take the Mohammedan home, and accept it as our Christian home? Not at all. Would we take the home of the wandering Pagan, and accept that? No. Christianity is the only system that ever did give man a home. It is God that setteth the solitary in families. It is this religion

of ours that opens by each man's hearth-stone a fountain of purity and peace. It is the family altar which is the strength of the Church and the hope of the world. When religion and the Sabbath had been abolished by solemn decree, and human reason set up as an object of idolatry in France, an eloquent historian of the times said: "The last sanctuary of religion here in France was the domestic fire-side; the last altar on which were offered sacrifices to God was the family altar; the last one that ministered at that altar was the pious mother; and the last worshippers that knelt around it were her helpless offspring."

This language is no more eloquent than true. If you multiply good homes and peaceful cities and kingdoms, you will make a happy world. We cannot do without this element in our religion; it is here that one of its greatest blessings comes to us; and it is the memory of these homes that has kept many of you men in the path of duty. When temptation has been tugging at your heart-strings, you could not find it in you to do that great wickedness, and disgrace the memory of your father and mother. You could not help remembering that you had been taught to kneel around the family altar, when your venerated father read lessons from the old family Bible that lay on the stand, and thanked God for the benefits that Christianity brings to the domestic associations and relationships of human life. It gives to the home a sanctity which nothing else ever gave and nothing can give. Why is it, in the humblest cabin, on the distant frontiers, before a stranger enters, he gives the signal that he wants to enter? What has led to that custom among all Christian customs, that, before a stranger shall dare to step within the lines of the family circle, some one from within the lines must bid him come? That is the fruit of our Christianity; that is what our religion does for our homes. It makes home a sanctified place; it makes our houses quiet places to us, and the stranger may not interfere

rudely and throw himself upon our family circle unless we give him leave to do so. You do not find that among the wild Indians; you do not find it in the same degree, or hardly in a limited degree, except where this system of religious belief and religious practice prevails.

And what does Christianity do for man as a member of civil society? What does it do for states and nations? I can well afford to ask you that question. As an American citizen, I have whereof to glory, and so have you. Ours is the only nation that ever existed which owed its existence to the development of Christian principle. There is a painting in the rotunda at the Capitol before which I always pause. I do not recollect that I ever walked heedlessly across that great circle without stopping to look at it, and as I looked, I felt my pulse beat with a more patriotic throb and my devotions kindled. The picture reveals upon the deck of a vessel a gray-haired old pastor, kneeling, with open Bible, and venerable men bowed around him. In the outer circle there are younger persons, and the young wife hanging upon the arm of him whom she has chosen from all the men on earth to be her protector, guide, and support, looking trustfully and confidently into the manly face of her husband. I thank God that my nation traces its origin to such sires; I thank God that they who first laid the foundations of social order upon the shores of this Western world have left to us untouched,

“—what first they found,  
Freedom to worship God.”

The memory of such men shall never perish.

“Their memories sparkle o’er each fountain,  
Their spirits wrap the distant mountain;  
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,  
Rolls mingling with their fame for ever.”

I thank God for the influence that Christianity has upon states and nations. When old dynasties are shaking all through Europe, when their foundation is being heaved up to the light of noonday, we begin to learn on what they rested. What is the first element of progress? What did Spain do yesterday when she determined to throw off the shackles of an intolerable tyranny which has degraded her and made her the weakest of nations, who in the days of Charles the Fifth was the mightiest on the globe? What is the first element that enters into the proclamation indicative of a better condition of things? Religious liberty, the rights of conscience, fair play to human intellect and human souls. What did Austria do when she threw off the Papal concordat? Did not she begin by giving a little more liberty to human thought? Did not she say in subdued tones—and her voice will be uttered more loudly in due time—"Let human intellects have fair play?" When Luther unchained the Bible, did not he let human intellects out of prison? When we took the Bible as our religion, when we took a "thus saith the Lord" and nothing short of that as binding our intellects and consciences, we declared that we would have the liberty which God gave us. There are a great many who think that we are indebted to our Constitution and laws for our privileges. This is not so. Our Constitution recognises the rights God gave us; it is but an echo of that divine teaching which makes a man directly responsible to God. I thank God that those rights are recognised, but I do not thank Congress for giving them to me. We hold them by a higher power than the Constitution, and when necessary we appeal to that higher power: we ask God to prosper us when we find it necessary to invoke his aid in special exigencies.

You may gauge the amount of civil liberty in any land by the amount of religious liberty it enjoys. Show me a free nation that has not an open Bible; show me a free

people to whom the Gospel is not preached in the vernacular. Thirty odd years ago, the Emperor of all the Russias gave his sanction to the Bible Society, which contemplated the universal diffusion of the Scriptures among his people in the Russian language. A journalist of our own country said: "One of two things will happen—either the Emperor will abolish that Bible Society or civil liberty will creep into Russia." What was the result? In less than a score of years, his majesty issued an imperial ukase abolishing the Bible Society.

It is profitable, then, to man in every department; for there are but three divine organizations among men—the Family, which is the oldest, the Church, and the State. These are all the organizations that have God's express sanction. We have seen that this religion promotes the interests of each one of them; that it brings the individual in contact with God, purifying and exalting him; that it improves the family and elevates the state. Is it a little thing, therefore, that we plead with you to aid in propagating this kind of religion which accomplishes all these results and which appeals to us in all our highest and best interests? It has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Now, good as all these things are that I have mentioned, if it did not take in the life to come, I say to you honestly, I would not stand before you as a minister; I would not wander up and down this land of ours, from Lake Superior to the Pacific; I would not leave my wife practically a widow and my children fatherless for the sake of preaching a religion that stopped with time. If I had nothing better to offer you than the advantages of pleasant homes, good governments, and quiet consciences; if that all ended with the three score years and ten, I, for one, should cease to advocate this religion; but I bless God there is an hereafter to all this labor of planting missions, building churches, and

organizing Sabbath schools. There will be an hereafter to all the work we do here this morning. I believe, as you do, that there is another and a better world, and that when you and I stand upon the verge of the grave, we shall hear sweet and gentle voices coming down to us, see fair hands waving to us, and listen to angels whispering: "Come up higher." We expect the ultimatum there. . . . As I look at history and at God's designs, I believe this nation itself is the greatest missionary field which exists on earth, and I feel that we are doing much for Christ's cause and his kingdom when we take good care to preserve law, purity, and Christianity among us. What can we do abroad if there is a failure in this respect at home? If anarchy sweep over the land here, if our Sabbaths are abolished, and our people grow up drunkards, what can we do in planting missions in pagan lands? We must take care of home interests.

Let me mention one or two facts. Do you know what inheritance God has given us? Three and a half millions of square miles of territory, over which our own flag floats. God never, from the beginning of time, gave any nation such a landed estate as this. Do you realize that just about one-half of all this territory has no organized State governments—one million one hundred thousand square miles has no regularly organized State government? and do you remember that nearly one-third of the whole has come under our jurisdiction since 1846? Do you not see, then, the need that we be active, as American Christians, to take care of these home interests? It is not enough that we look after cities, though they should not be neglected, but we must keep abreast with the advancing march of civilization. There are some here who have been at those distant outposts, and have seen cities and towns rise like magic; these must not be overlooked.

We have church accommodations for eighteen millions of our people; we have spent voluntarily one hundred and

seventy-five millions to build these churches. Our own little Church, which is but a small part of the population, has dedicated more than one church a day for the last fifty years. But we must have money from Christian people to aid in this work. All this great responsibility rests upon Christian people and upon true patriots, for I hold him to have a very doubtful claim to the character of a patriot who has not sense enough to see the necessity of promoting a liberal voluntary action in the great work of supporting the interests of Christ's Church. Now, I leave this matter with you. We are trying to do our part. We have planted our missions, as I have said, all over this land, and we do not allow any to go before us if we can help it, for we feel that it is our business to be up and doing. Our army is never disbanded; the sun never sets upon our altars; wherever it is, it is shining somewhere upon Methodist meeting-houses. I pray God to prosper the cause of Bible Christianity. I should be ashamed of myself to stand here and plead the claims of my own Church as against others. I have no such narrow, sectarian notions about it. I say, God speed the progress of the Master's Kingdom. I care not who carries the banner, if it be the banner of Christ. May God advance it, no matter in whose hands it may be carried.

I never felt a greater awe resting upon my spirit in addressing a congregation than I did when I rose here this morning, in thinking of the work before us and of the deeds done by us. The account will be kept by the recording angel, and we will meet these contributions in the judgment day. I leave it with you to decide; but I ask, "What owest thou to the Lord?" and whatever you owe, make the honest effort to pay for your own sake as well as others.



## XLIV.

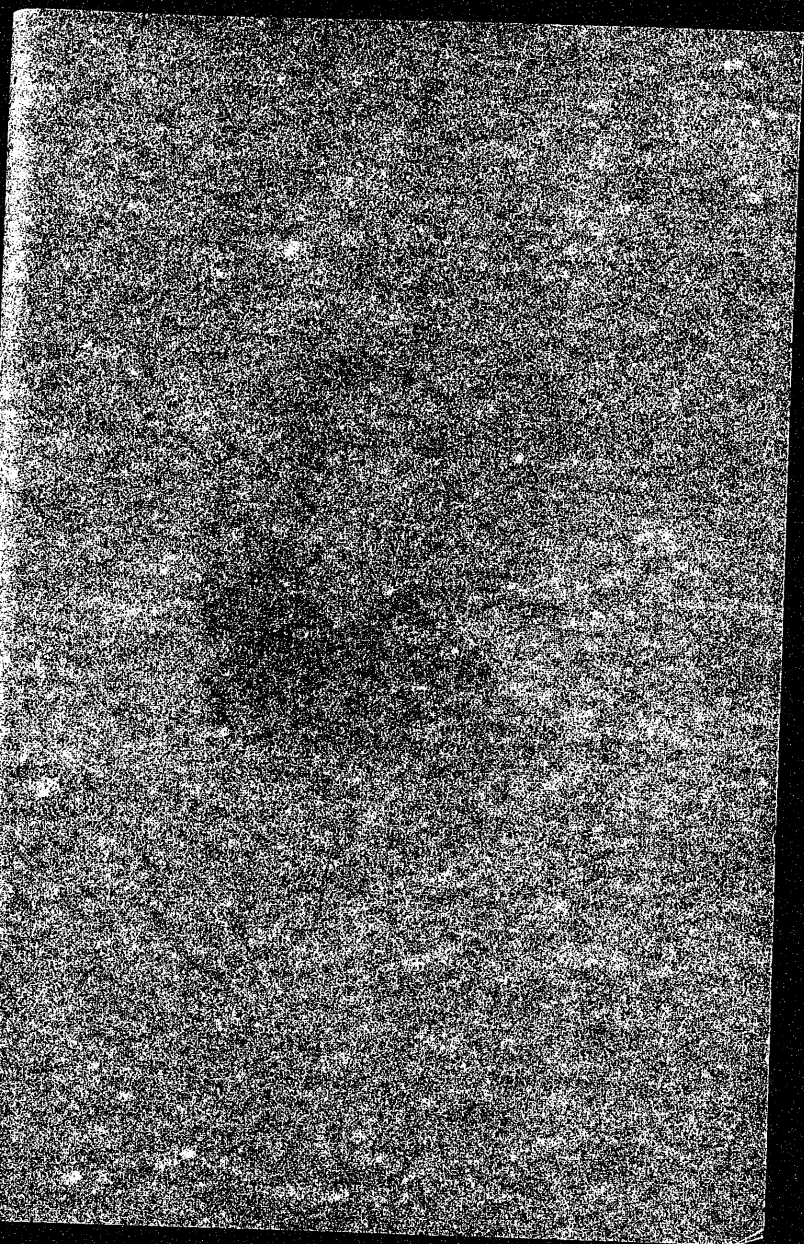
### CHRIST'S ADVENT TO JUDGMENT.

TAYLOR.

[JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D., whom Hannah Moore calls "Shakspeare of the Church," was one of the most gifted, learned, and devout divines and theologians of England. At times, worthless scholastic conceits detract from the force and clearness of his thoughts; but his comprehensive glance, incisiveness of argument, wealth of fancy, and strong practical piety, would atone for greater derelictions. He was born in Cambridge, the son of a barber, August 15th 1613. Entering Caius College as a sizar, he graduated with honors, and at twenty-three became chaplain in ordinary to Charles I. After the defeat of the royalists, he withdrew into Wales in 1645, and taught school for a livelihood. Here he became chaplain to the Earl of Carbery, to whom he dedicated his "Course of Sermons for all the Sundays in the year," published in 1651. His celebrated "Holy Living," "Holy Dying," and "Life of Christ," appeared about the same time. In 1660 Charles II. appointed him Bishop of Down and Connor, in Ireland. He died August 13th 1667, the author of many works. From the second and revised edition of his Sermons, the following is selected. It is the second of a series of three, the first of which treats of the universality of the Judgment, and the third of the sentence of condemnation or justification awaiting each mortal. His frequent Greek and Latin quotations are omitted.]

*"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—2 Cor. v. 10.*

1. IF we consider the person of the Judge, we first perceive that he is interested in the injury of the crimes he is to sentence: "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." It was for thy sins that the Judge did suffer such unspeakable pains as were enough to reconcile all the world to God; the sum and spirit of which pains could not be better understood than by the consequence of his own words,

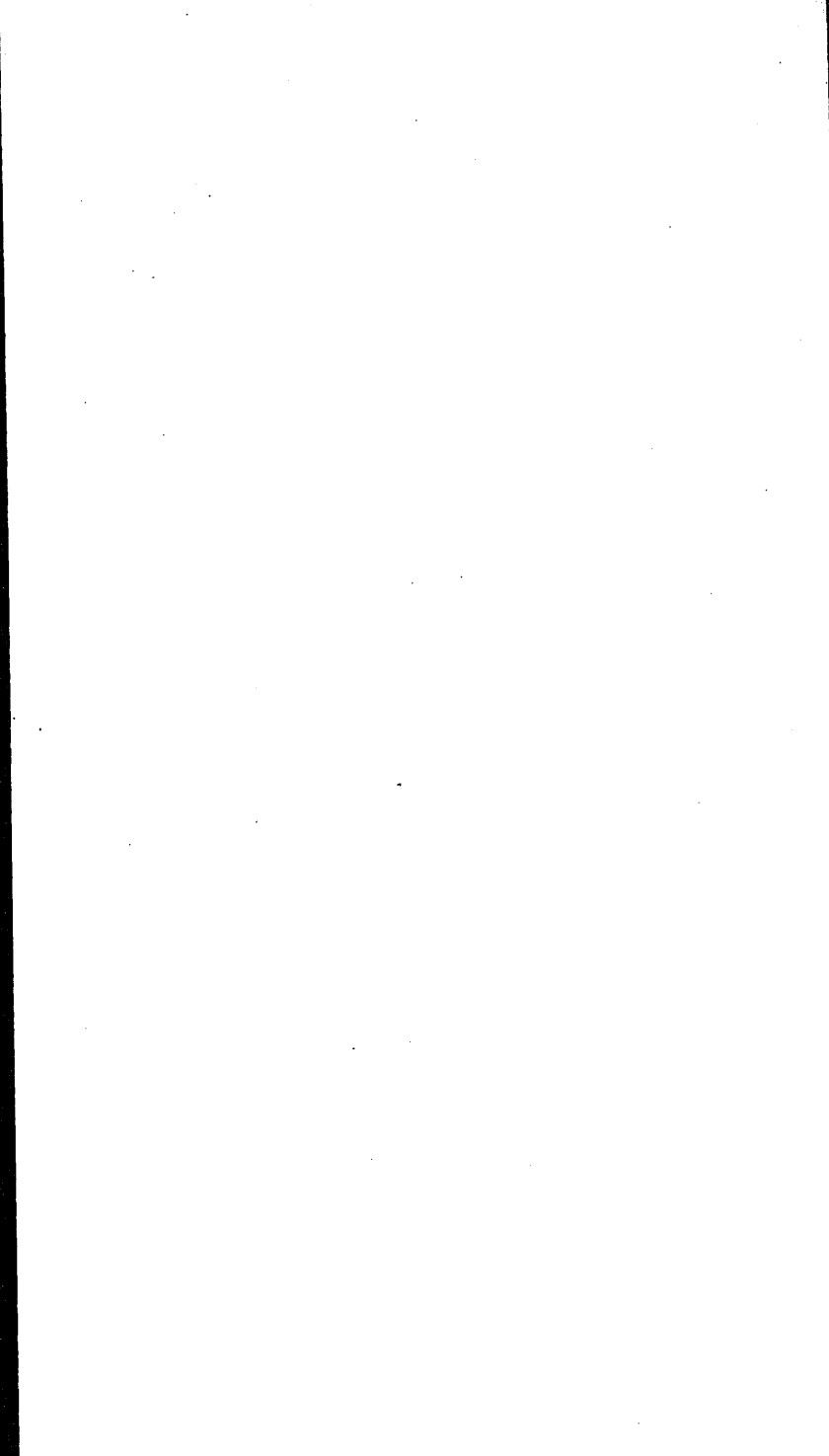






Engraved by J. G. Kneller

Jer. Taylor



"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" meaning, that he felt such horrible, pure, unmingled sorrows, that, although his human nature was personally united to the Godhead, yet at that instant he felt no comfortable emanations by sensible perception from the Divinity, but he was so drenched in sorrow that the Godhead seemed to have forsaken him. Beyond this, nothing can be added: but then, that thou hast for thy own particular made all this in vain and ineffective, that Christ thy Lord and Judge should be tormented for nothing, that thou wouldst not accept felicity and pardon when he purchased them at so dear a price, must needs be an infinite condemnation to such persons. How shalt thou look upon him that fainted and died for love of thee, and thou didst scorn his miraculous mercies? How shall we dare to behold that holy face that brought salvation to us, and we turned away and fell in love with death, and kissed deformity and sins? and yet in the beholding that face consists much of the glories of eternity. All the pains and passions, the sorrows and the groans, the humility and poverty, the labors and the watchings, the prayers and the sermons, the miracles and the prophecies, the whip and the nails, the death and the burial, the shame and the smart, the cross and the grave of Jesus, shall be laid upon thy score, if thou hast refused the mercies and design of all their holy ends and purposes. And if we remember what a calamity that was which broke the Jewish nation in pieces, when Christ came to judge them for their murdering him who was their King and the Prince of life, and consider that this was but a dark image of the terrors of the day of judgment, we may then apprehend that there is some strange unspeakable evil that attends them that are guilty of this death, and of so much evil to their Lord. Now it is certain if thou wilt not be saved by his death, you are guilty of his death; if thou wilt not suffer him to save thee, thou art guilty of destroying him; and then let it be

considered what is to be expected from that Judge before whom you stand as his murderer and betrayer. But this is but half of this consideration.

2. Christ may be crucified again, and upon a new account put to an open shame. For after that Christ had done all this by the direct actions of his priestly office, of sacrificing himself for us, he hath also done very many things for us which are also the fruits of his first love and prosecutions of our redemption. I will not instance in the strange arts of mercy that our Lord uses to bring us to live holy lives; but I consider, that things are so ordered, and so great a value set upon our souls since they are the images of God, and redeemed by the blood of the Holy Lamb, that the salvation of our souls is reckoned as a part of Christ's reward, a part of the glorification of his humanity. Every sinner that repents causes joy to Christ, and the joy is so great that it runs over and wets the fair brows and beauteous locks of cherubims and seraphims, and all the angels have a part of that banquet; then it is that our blessed Lord feels the fruits of his holy death, the acceptation of his holy sacrifice, the graciousness of his person, the return of his prayers. For all that Christ did or suffered, and all that he now does as a priest in heaven, is to glorify his Father by bringing souls to God. For this it was that he was born and died, that he descended from heaven to earth, from life to death, from the cross to the grave; this was the purpose of his resurrection and ascension, of the end and design of all the miracles and graces of God manifested to all the world by him; and now what man is so vile, such a malicious fool, that will refuse to bring joy to his Lord by doing himself the greatest good in the world? They who refuse to do this, are said to crucify the Lord of Life again, and put him to an open shame—that is, they, as much as in them lies, bring Christ from his glorious joys to the labors of his life and the shame of his death; they advance his enemies,

and refuse to advance the kingdom of their Lord; they put themselves in that state in which they were when Christ came to die for them; and now that he is in a state that he may rejoice over them (for he hath done all his share towards it), every wicked man takes his head from the blessing, and rather chooses that the devil should rejoice in his destruction, than that his Lord should triumph in his felicity. And now upon the supposition of these premises, we may imagine that it will be an infinite amazement to meet that Lord to be our Judge whose person we have murdered, whose honor we have disparaged, whose purposes we have destroyed, whose joys we have lessened, whose passion we have made ineffectual, and whose love we have trampled under our profane and impious feet.

3. But there is yet a third part of this consideration. As it will be inquired at the day of judgment concerning the dishonors to the person of Christ, so also concerning the profession and institution of Christ, and concerning his poor members; for by these also we make sad reflections upon our Lord. Every man that lives wickedly disgraces the religion and institution of Jesus, he discourages strangers from entering into it, he weakens the hands of them that are in already, and makes that the adversaries speak reproachfully of the name of Christ; but although it is certain our Lord and Judge will deeply resent all these things, yet there is one thing which he takes more tenderly, and that is, the uncharitableness of men towards his poor. It shall then be upbraided to them by the Judge, that himself was hungry and they refused to give meat to him that gave them his body and heart-blood to feed them and quench their thirst; that they denied a robe to cover his nakedness, and yet he would have clothed their souls with the robe of his righteousness, lest their souls should be found naked on the day of the Lord's visitation; and all this unkindness is nothing but that evil men were uncharitable to their brethren, they would



not feed the hungry, nor give drink to the thirsty, nor clothe the naked, nor relieve their brothers' needs, nor forgive their follies, nor cover their shame, nor turn their eyes from delighting in their affronts and evil accidents; this is it which our Lord will take so tenderly, that his brethren for whom he died, who sucked the paps of his mother, that fed on his body and are nourished with his blood, whom he hath lodged in his heart and entertains in his bosom, the partners of his spirit and co-heirs of his inheritance, that these should be denied relief and suffered to go away ashamed, and unpitied; this our Blessed Lord will take so ill, that all those who are guilty of this unkindness, have no reason to expect the favor of the Court.

4. To this if we add the almightiness of the Judge, his infinite wisdom and knowledge of all causes, and all persons, and all circumstances, that he is infinitely just, inflexibly angry, and impartial in his sentence, there can be nothing added either to the greatness or the requisites of a terrible and an Almighty Judge. For who can resist him who is almighty? Who can evade his scrutiny that knows all things? Who can hope for pity of him that is inflexible? Who can think to be exempted when the Judge is righteous and impartial? But in all these annexes of the Great Judge, that which I shall now remark, is that indeed which hath terror in it, and that is, the severity of our Lord. For then is the day of vengeance and recompenses, and no mercy at all shall be showed, but to them that are the sons of mercy; for the other, their portion is such as can be expected from these premises.

1. If we remember the instances of God's severity in this life, in the days of mercy and repentence, in those days when judgment waits upon mercy, and receives laws by the rules and measures of pardon, and that for all the rare streams of loving-kindness issuing out of paradise and refreshing all our fields with a moisture more fruitful than the floods of

Nilus, still there are mingled some storms and violences, some fearful instances of the divine justice, we may more readily expect it will be worse, infinitely worse, at that day, when Judgment shall ride in triumph, and Mercy shall be the accuser of the wicked. But so we read, and are commanded to remember, because they are written for our example, that God destroyed at once five cities of the plain, and all the country, and Sodom and her sisters are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Fearful it was when God destroyed at once twenty-three thousand for fornication, and an exterminating angel in one night killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians, and the first-born of all the families of Egypt, and for the sin of David in numbering the people, three-score and ten thousand of the people died, and God sent ten tribes into captivity and eternal oblivion and indistinction from a common people for their idolatry. Did not God strike Korah and his company with fire from heaven? and the earth opened and swallowed up the congregation of Abiram? And is not evil come upon all the world for one sin of Adam? Did not the anger of God break the nation of the Jews all in pieces with judgments so great, that no nation ever suffered the like, because none ever sinned so? And at once it was done, that God in anger destroyed all the world, and eight persons only escaped the angry baptism of water, and yet this world is the time of mercy; God hath opened here his magazines, and sent his Holy Son as the great channel and fountain of it, too: here he delights in mercy, and in judgment loves to remember it, and it triumphs over all his works, and God contrives instruments and accidents, chances and designs, occasions and opportunities for mercy. If, therefore, now the anger of God makes such terrible eruptions upon the wicked people that delight in sin, how great may we suppose that anger to be, how severe that judgment, how terrible that vengeance,

how intolerable those inflictions which God reserves for the full effusion of indignation on the great day of vengeance!

2. We may also guess at it by this: if God upon all single instances, and in the midst of our sins, before they are come to the full, and sometimes in the beginning of an evil habit, be so fierce in his anger, what can we imagine it to be in that day when the wicked are to drink the dregs of that horrid potion, and count over all the particulars of their whole treasure of wrath? "This is the day of wrath, and God shall reveal, or bring forth, his righteous judgments." The expression is taken from Deut. xxxii. 34: "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? I will restore it in the day of vengeance, for the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants." For so did the Lybian lion that was brought up under discipline, and taught to endure blows, and eat the meat of order and regular provision, and to suffer gentle usages and the familiarities of societies; but once he brake out into his own wildness, and killed two Roman boys; but those that forage in the Lybian mountains tread down and devour all that they meet or master; and when they have fasted two days, lay up an anger great as is their appetite, and bring certain death to all that can be overcome. God is pleased to compare himself to a lion; and though in this life he hath confined himself with promises and gracious emanations of an infinite goodness, and limits himself by conditions and covenants, and suffers himself to be overcome by prayers, and himself hath invented ways of atonement and expiation; yet when he is provoked by our unhandsome and unworthy actions, he makes sudden breaches, and tears some of us in pieces, and of others he breaks their bones or affrights their hopes and secular gayeties, and fills their house with mourning and cypress, and groans and death. But when this Lion of the tribe of Judah shall appear upon his own mountain, the mountain

of the Lord, in his natural dress of majesty, and that Justice shall have her chain and golden fetters taken off, then Justice shall strike, and Mercy shall not hold her hands; she shall strike sore strokes, and Pity shall not break the blow; and God shall account with us by minutes, and for words, and for thoughts, and then he shall be severe to mark what is done amiss; and that Justice may reign entirely, God shall open the wicked man's treasure, and tell the sums, and weigh grains and scruples. Said Philo upon the place of Deuteronomy before quoted: As there are treasures of good things, and God has crowns and sceptres in store for his saints and servants, and coronets for martyrs, and rosaries for virgins, and phials full of prayers, and bottles full of tears, and a register of sighs and penitential groans, so God hath a treasure of wrath and fury, of scourges and scorpions, and then shall be produced the shame of lust, and the malice of envy, and the groans of the oppressed, and the persecutions of the saints, and the cares of covetousness, and the troubles of ambition, and the insolencies of traitors, and the violences of rebels, and the rage of anger, and the uneasiness of impatience, and the restlessness of unlawful desires; and by this time the monsters and diseases will be numerous and intolerable, when God's heavy hand shall press the *sanies* and the intolerableness, the obliquity and the unreasonableness, the amazement and the disorder, the smart and the sorrow, the guilt and the punishment, out from all our sins, and pour them into one chalice, and mingle them with an infinite wrath, and make the wicked drink off all the vengeance, and force it down their unwilling throats with the violence of devils and accursed spirits.

3. We may guess at the severity of the Judge by the lesser strokes of that judgment which he is pleased to send upon sinners in this world, to make them afraid of the horrible pains of doomsday—I mean the torments of an unquiet conscience, the amazement and confusions of some sins and some

persons. For I have sometimes seen persons surprised in a base action, and taken in the circumstances of crafty theft and secret injustices, before their excuse was ready. They have changed their color, their speech hath faltered, their tongue stammered, their eyes did wander and fix nowhere, till shame made them sink into their hollow eye-pits to retreat from the images and circumstances of discovery; their wits are lost, their reason useless, the whole order of their soul is discomposed, and they neither see, nor feel, nor think, as they used to do, but they are broken into disorder by a stroke of damnation and a lesser stripe of hell; but then if you come to observe a guilty and a base murderer, a condemned traitor, and see him harassed first by an evil conscience, and then pulled in pieces by the hangman's hooks, or broken upon sorrows and the wheel, we may then guess (as well as we can in this life) what the pains of that day shall be to accursed souls. But those we shall consider afterwards in their proper scene; now only we are to estimate the severity of our Judge by the intolerableness of an evil conscience; if guilt will make a man despair—and despair will make a man mad, confounded, and dissolved in all the regions of his senses and more noble faculties, that he shall neither feel, nor hear, nor see, anything but spectres and illusions, devils and frightful dreams, and hear noises, and shriek fearfully, and look pale and distracted, like a hopeless man from the horrors and confusions of a lost battle, upon which all his hopes did stand—then the wicked must at the day of judgment expect strange things and fearful, and such which now no language can express, and then no patience can endure. Then only it can truly be said that he is inflexible and inexorable. No prayers then can move him, no groans can cause him to pity thee; therefore pity thyself in time, that when the Judge comes thou mayest be one of the sons of everlasting mercy, to whom pity belongs as part of thine inheritance, for all else shall without any

remorse (except his own) be condemned by the horrible sentence!

4. That all may think themselves concerned in this consideration, let us remember that even the righteous and most innocent shall pass through a severe trial. Many of the ancients explicated this severity by the fire of conflagration, which say they shall purify those souls at the day of judgment, which in this life have built upon the foundation (hay and stubble) works of folly and false opinions, and states of imperfection. So St. Augustin's doctrine was: "The great fire at doomsday shall throw some into the portion of the left hand, and others shall be purified and represented on the right." And the same is affirmed by Origen and Lactantius; and St. Hilary thus expostulates: "Since we are to give account for every idle word, shall we long for the day of judgment, wherein we must, every one of us, pass that unwearied fire in which those grievous punishments for expiating the soul from sins must be endured; for to such as have been baptized with the Holy Ghost it remaineth that they be consummated with the fire of judgment." And St. Ambrose adds: "That if any be as Peter or as John, they are baptized with this fire, and he that is purged here had need to be purged there again. Let him also purify us, that every one of us being burned with that flaming sword, not burned up or consumed, we may enter into Paradise, and give thanks unto the Lord who hath brought us into a place of refreshment." This opinion of theirs is, in the main of it, very uncertain; relying upon the sense of some obscure place of Scripture, is only apt to represent the great severity of the Judge at that day; and it hath in it this only certainty, that even the most innocent person hath great need of mercy, and he that hath the greatest cause of confidence, although he runs to no rocks to hide him, yet he runs to the protection of the cross, and hides himself under the shadow of the divine mercies: and he that shall receive

the absolution of the blessed sentence, shall also suffer the terrors of the day, and the fearful circumstances of Christ's coming. The effect of this consideration is this: That if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear? And if St. Paul, whose conscience accused him not, yet durst not be too confident, because he was not hereby justified, but might be found faulty by the severer judgment of his Lord, how shall we appear, with all our crimes and evil habits round about us? If there be need of much mercy to the servants and friends of the Judge, then his enemies shall not be able to stand upright in judgment.

5. But the matter is still of more concernment. The Pharisees believed that they were innocent if they abstained from criminal actions, such as were punishable by the Judge; and many Christians think all is well with them if they abstain from such sins as have a name in the tables of their laws; but because some sins are secret and not discernible by man, others are public, but not punished, because they are frequent and perpetual, and without external mischiefs in some instances, and only provocations against God, men think that in their concernment they have no place; and such are jeering, and many instances of wantonness, and revelling, doing petty spites, and doggedness, and churlishness, lying and pride; and beyond this, some are very like virtues; as too much gentleness and slackness in government, or too great severity and rigor of animadversions, bitterness in reproof of sinners, uncivil circumstances, imprudent handlings of some criminals, and zeal. Nay, there are some vile things, which, through the evil discourings and worse manners of men, are passed into an artificial and false reputation, and men are accounted wits for talking atheistically, and valiant for being murderers, and wise for deceiving and circumventing our brothers; and many irregularities more, for all which we are safe enough here. But

when the day of judgment comes, these shall be called to a severe account, for the Judge is omniscient and knows all things, and his tribunal takes cognisance of all causes, and hath a coercitive for all. "All things are naked and open to his eyes," saith St. Paul, therefore nothing shall escape for being secret. And all prejudices being laid aside, it shall be considered concerning our evil rules and false principles: "When I shall receive the people, I shall judge according unto right," (so we read); "When we shall receive time, I will judge justices and judgments," so the vulgar Latin reads it—that is, in the day of the Lord, when time is put into his hand and time shall be no more, he shall judge concerning those judgments which men here make of things below; and the fighting man shall perceive the noises of drunkards, and fools that cried him up for daring to kill his brother, to have been evil principles; and then it will be declared, by strange effects, that wealth is not the greatest fortune, and ambition was not but an ill counsellor, and to lie for a good cause was no piety, and to do evil for the glory of God was but an ill worshipping him, and that good-nature was not well employed when it spent itself in vicious company and evil compliances, and that piety was not softness and want of courage, and that poverty ought not to have been contemptible, and that cause that is unsuccessful is not therefore evil, and what is folly here shall be wisdom there. Then shall men curse their evil guides and their accursed superinduced necessities and the evil guises of the world, and then when silence shall be found innocence, and eloquence in many instances condemned as criminal, when the poor shall reign and generals and tyrants shall lie low in horrible regions, when he that lost all shall find a treasure, and he that spoiled him shall be found naked and spoiled by the destroyer,—then we shall find it true that we ought here to have done what our Judge, our Blessed Lord, shall do there, that is, take our measures of good and evil by the



severities of the word of God, by the sermons of Christ, and the four Gospels, and by the Epistles of St. Paul, by justice and charity, by the laws of God and the laws of wise princes and republics, by the rules of nature and the just proportions of reason, by the examples of good men and the proverbs of wise men, by severity and the rules of discipline; for then it shall be that truth shall ride in triumph, and the holiness of Christ's sermons shall be manifest to all the world, that the word of God shall be advanced over all the discourses of men, and Wisdom shall be justified by all her children. Then shall be heard those words of an evil and tardy repentance and the just rewards of folly: "We fools thought their life madness; but behold they are justified before the throne of God, and we are miserable for ever." Here men think it strange if others will not run into the same excess of riot; but there they will wonder how themselves should be so mad and infinitely unsafe by being strangely and inexcusably unreasonable. The sum is this: The Judge shall appear clothed with wisdom, and power, and justice, and knowledge, and an impartial Spirit, making no separations by the proportions of this world, but by the measures of God, not giving sentence by the principles of our folly and evil customs, but by the severity of his own laws and measures of the Spirit. "God does not judge as man judges."

6. Now that the Judge is come thus arrayed, thus prepared, so instructed, let us next consider the circumstances of our appearing and his sentence; and first I consider that men at the day of judgment that belong not to the portion of life, shall have three sorts of accusers: 1. Christ himself, who is their Judge; 2. Their own conscience, whom they have injured and blotted with characters of death and foul dishonor; 3. The devil, their enemy, whom they served.

1. Christ shall be their accuser, not only upon the stock of those direct injuries (which I before reckoned) of crucifying the Lord of life, once and again, &c., but upon the titles

of contempt and unworthiness, of unkindness and ingratitude; and the accusation will be nothing else but a plain representation of those artifices and assistances, those bonds and invitations, those constrainings and importunities, which our dear Lord used to us to make it almost impossible to lie in sin, and necessary to be saved. For it will, it must needs be, a fearful exprobration of our unworthiness, when the Judge himself shall bear witness against us that the wisdom of God himself was strangely employed in bringing us safely to felicity. I shall draw a short scheme, which, although it must needs be infinitely short of what God hath done for us, yet it will be enough to shame us. God did not only give his Son for an example, and the Son gave himself for a price for us, but both gave the Holy Spirit to assist us in mighty graces, for the verifications of faith, and the entertainments of hope, and the increase and perseverance of charity. God gave to us a new nature, he put another principle into us, a third part of a perfective constitution; we have the Spirit put into us, to be a part of us, as properly to produce actions of a holy life, as the soul of man in the body does produce the natural. God hath exalted human nature, and made it in the person of Jesus Christ, to sit above the highest seat of angels, and the angels are made ministering spirits, ever since their Lord became our brother. Christ hath by a miraculous sacrament given us his body to eat and his blood to drink, he made ways that we may become all one with him. He hath given us an easy religion, and hath established our future felicity upon natural and pleasant conditions, and we are to be happy hereafter if we suffer God to make us happy here; and things are so ordered that a man must take more pains to perish than to be happy. God hath found out rare ways to make our prayers acceptable, our weak petitions, the desires of our imperfect souls, to prevail mightily with God, and to lay a holy violence and an undeniable necessity upon himself; and God will deny

us nothing but when we ask of him to do us ill offices, to give us poisons and dangers, and evil nourishment, and temptations; and he that hath given such mighty power to the prayers of his servants, yet will not be moved by those potent and mighty prayers to do any good man an evil turn, or to grant him one mischief—in that only God can deny us. But in all things else God hath made all the excellent things in heaven and earth to join towards holy and fortunate effects; for he hath appointed an angel to present the prayers of saints, and Christ makes intercession for us, and the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groans unutterable, and all the holy men in the world pray for all and for every one, and God hath instructed us with scriptures, and precedents, and collateral and direct assistances to pray, and he encouraged us with divers excellent promises, and parables, and examples, and teaches us what to pray, and how, and gives one promise to public prayer, and another to private prayer, and to both the blessing of being heard.

Add to this account that God did heap blessings upon us without order, infinitely, perpetually, and in all instances, when we needed and when we needed not. He heard us when we prayed, giving us all, and giving us more, than we desired. He desired that we should ask, and yet he hath also prevented our desires. He watched for us, and at his own charge sent a whole order of men whose employment is to minister to our souls; and if all this had not been enough, he had given us more also. He promised heaven to our obedience, a province for a dish of water, a kingdom for a prayer, satisfaction for desiring it, grace for receiving, and more grace for accepting and using the first. He invited us with gracious words and perfect entertainments; he threatened horrible things to us if we would not be happy; he hath made strange necessities for us, making our very repentance to be a conjugation of holy actions, and holy times, and a long succession; he hath taken away all excuses from us;

he hath called us off from temptation ; he bears our charges ; he is always beforehand with us in every act of favor, and perpetually slow in striking, and his arrows are unfeathered ; and he is so long, first, in drawing his sword, and another long while in whetting it, and yet longer in lifting his hand to strike, that before the blow comes the man hath repented long, unless he be a fool and impudent ; and then God is so glad of an excuse to lay his anger aside, that certainly, if after all this, we refuse life and glory, there is no more to be said ; this plain story will condemn us : but the story is very much longer ; and, as our conscience will represent all our sins to us, so the Judge will represent all his Father's kindnesses, as Nathan did to David, when he was to make the justice of the divine sentence appear against him. Then it shall be remembered that the joys of every day's piety would have been a greater pleasure every night than the remembrance of every night's sin could have been in the morning ; that every night the trouble and labor of the day's virtue would have been as much passed and turned to as very a nothing as the pleasure of that day's sin, but that they would be infinitely distinguished by the remanent effects. So Musonius expressed the sense of this inducement ; and that this argument would have grown so great by that time we come to die that the certain pleasures, and rare confidences, and holy hopes of a death-bed would be a strange felicity to the man when he remembers he did obey, if they were compared to the fearful expectations of a dying sinner, who feels by a formidable and affrighting remembrance that of his sins nothing remains but the gains of a miserable eternity. The offering ourselves to God every morning, and the thanksgiving to God every night, hope and fear, shame and desire, the honor of leaving a fair name behind us, and the shame of dying like a fool,—everything indeed in the world is made to be an argument and an inducement to us to invite us to come to God and be saved ; and therefore

when this, and infinitely more, shall by the Judge be exhibited in sad remembrances, there needs no other sentence; we shall condemn ourselves with a hasty shame, and a fearful confusion, to see how good God hath been to us, and how base we have been to ourselves. Thus Moses is said to accuse the Jews; and thus also he that does accuse, is said to condemn, as Verres was by Cicero, and Claudia by Domitius her accuser, and the world of impenitent persons by the men of Nineveh, and all by Christ, their Judge. I represent the horror of this circumstance to consist in this, besides the reasonableness of the judgment, and the certainty of the condemnation, it cannot but be an argument of an intolerable despair to perishing souls, when he that was our Advocate all our life, shall, in the day of that appearing, be our Accuser and our Judge, a party against us, an injured person in the day of his power and of his wrath, doing execution upon all his own foolish and malicious enemies.

2. Our conscience shall be our accuser. But this signifies but these two things: First. That we shall be condemned for the evils that we have done and shall then remember, God by his power wiping away the dust from the tables of our memory, and taking off the consideration and the voluntary neglect and rude shufflings of our cases of conscience. For then we shall see things as they are, the evil circumstances and the crooked intentions, the adherent unhandsoneness and the direct crimes; for all things are laid up safely, and though we draw a curtain of cobweb over them, and few fig-leaves before our shame, yet God shall draw away the curtain, and forgetfulness shall be no more, because, with a taper in the hand of God, all the corners of our nastiness shall be discovered. And, secondly, it signifies this also, that not only the justice of God shall be confessed by us in our own shame and condemnation, but the evil of the sentence shall be received into us, to melt our bowels and to break our heart in pieces within us, be-

cause we are the authors of our own death, and our own inhuman hands have torn our souls in pieces. Thus far the horrors are great, and when evil men consider it, it is certain they must be afraid to die. Even they that have lived well, have some sad considerations, and the tremblings of humility, and suspicion of themselves. I remember St. Cyprian tells of a good man who in his agony of death saw a phantasm of a noble and angelical shape, who, frowning and angry, said to him: "Ye cannot endure sickness, ye are troubled at the evils of the world, and yet you are loth to die and to be quit of them; what shall I do to you?" Although this is apt to represent every man's condition more or less, yet, concerning persons of wicked lives, it hath in it too many sad degrees of truth; they are impatient of sorrow, and justly fearful of death, because they know not how to comfort themselves in the evil accidents of their lives; and their conscience is too polluted to take death for sanctuary, and to hope to have amends made to their condition by the sentence of the day of judgment. Evil and sad is their condition who cannot be contented here nor blessed hereafter, whose life is their misery and their conscience is their enemy, whose grave is their prison and death their undoing, and the sentence of doomsday the beginning of an intolerable condition!

3. The third sort of accusers are the devils, and they will do it with malicious and evil purposes. The prince of the devils hath Diabolus for one of his chiefest appellatives. The accuser of the brethren he is by his professed malice and employment; and therefore God, who delights that his mercy should triumph and his goodness prevail over all the malice of men and devils, hath appointed one whose office is to reprove the accuser and to resist the enemy, and to be a defender of their cause who belong to God. The Holy Spirit is a defender; the evil spirit is the accuser; and they that in this life belong to one or the other, shall in the same

proportion be treated at the day of judgment. The devil shall accuse the brethren, that is, the saints and servants of God, and shall tell concerning their follies and infirmities, the sins of their youth and the weakness of their age, the imperfect grace and the long schedule of omissions of duty, their scruples and their fears, their diffidences and pusillanimity, and all those things which themselves by strict examination find themselves guilty of and have confessed, all their shame and the matter of their sorrows, their evil intentions and their little plots, their carnal confidences and too fond adherences to the things of this world, their indulgence and easiness of government, their wilder joys and freer meals, their loss of time and their too forward and apt compliances, their trifling arrests and little peevishnesses, the mixtures of the world with the things of the Spirit, and all the incidences of humanity he will bring forth and aggravate them by the circumstance of ingratitude, and the breach of promise, and the evacuating all their holy purposes, and breaking their resolutions, and rifling their vows, and all these things, being drawn into an entire representation, and the bills clogged by numbers, will make the best man in the world seem foul and unhandsome, and stained with the characters of death and evil dishonor. But for these there is appointed a defender. The Holy Spirit that maketh intercession for us shall then also interpose, and against all these things shall oppose the passion of our Blessed Lord, and upon all their defects shall cast the *robe of his righteousness*; and the sins of their youth shall not prevail so much as the repentance of their age, and their omissions be excused by probable intervening causes, and their little escapes shall appear single and in disunion, because they were always kept asunder by penitential prayers and sighings, and their seldom returns of sin by their daily watchfulness, and their often infirmities by the sincerity of their souls, and their scruples by their zeal, and their passions by

their love, and all by the mercies of God and the sacrifice which their Judge offered and the Holy Spirit made effective by daily graces and assistances. These, therefore, infallibly go to the portion of the right hand, because the Lord our God shall answer for them. But as for the wicked, it is not so with them; for although the plain story of their life be to them a sad condemnation, yet what will be answered when it shall be told concerning them, that they despised God's mercies, and feared not his angry judgments; that they regarded not his word, and loved not his excellencies; that they were not persuaded by the promises, nor affrighted by his threatenings; that they neither would accept his government nor his blessings; that all the sad stories that ever happened in both the worlds (in all which himself did escape till the day of his death, and was not concerned in them save only that he was called upon by every one of them, which he ever heard or saw or was told of, to repentance), that all these were sent to him in vain? But cannot the accuser truly say to the Judge concerning such persons, "They were thine by creation, but mine by their own choice; thou didst redeem them indeed, but they sold themselves to me for a trifle, or for an unsatisfying interest; thou diedst for them, but they obeyed my commandments; I gave them nothing, I promised them nothing but the filthy pleasures of a night, or the joys of madness, or the delights of a disease; I never hanged upon the cross three long hours for them, nor endured the labors of a poor life thirty-three years together for their interest; only when they were thine by the merit of thy death, they quickly became mine by the demerit of their ingratitude; and when thou hadst clothed their soul with thy robe, and adorned them by thy graces, we stripped them naked as their shame, and only put on a robe of darkness, and they thought themselves secure and went dancing to their grave like a drunkard to a fight, or a fly unto a candle; and therefore they that did partake with



us in our faults must divide with us in our portion and fearful interest." This is a sad story because it ends in death, and there is nothing to abate or lessen the calamity. It concerns us therefore to consider in time that he that tempts us will accuse us, and what he calls pleasant now he shall then say was nothing, and all the gains that now invite earthly souls and mean persons to vanity, was nothing but the seeds of folly, and the harvest is pain and sorrow and shame eternal. But then, since this horror proceeds upon the account of so many accusers, God hath put it into our power by a timely accusation of ourselves in the tribunal of the court Christian, to prevent all the arts of aggravation which at doomsday shall load foolish and undiscerning souls. He that accuses himself of his crimes here, means to forsake them, and looks upon them on all sides, and spies out his deformity, and is taught to hate them, he is instructed and prayed for, he prevents the anger of God and defeats the devil's malice, and, by making shame the instrument of repentance, he takes away the sting, and makes that to be his medicine which otherwise would be his death: and, concerning this exercise, I shall only add what the patriarch of Alexandria told an old religious person in his hermitage. Having asked him what he found in that desert, he was answered, "Only this, to judge and condemn myself perpetually; that is the employment of my solitude." The patriarch answered, "There is no other way." By accusing ourselves we shall make the devil's malice useless, and our own consciences dear, and be reconciled to the Judge by the severities of an early repentance, and then we need to fear no accusers.

## XLV.

### THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

HANNA.

[WILLIAM HANNA, D.D., LL.D., the colleague of Dr. Guthrie in St. John's Church, Edinburgh, was born at Belfast in 1808. As son-in-law of Dr. Chalmers, he edited the memoirs of the latter's life and his posthumous writings. His own literary labors are original, scholarly, and choice, having a pure transparency of thought and chaste imaginativeness of illustration. Justly famous is "The Life of Christ," a series of sermons embodying the life-like and devout conceptions gained by a pilgrimage through the Holy Land. Originally published in six books, this has been recently issued by the American Tract Society in one volume. An earlier work is "Wycliffe and the Huguenots," being sketches of the rise of the Reformation in England, and of the early history of Protestantism in France.]

*"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?"—Luke x. 25-29.*

"BEHOLD, a certain lawyer stood up"—in all likelihood within some synagogue upon a sabbath-day. In rising to put a question to Jesus, he was guilty of no impertinent intrusion. Jesus had assumed the office of a public teacher, and it was by questions put and answered that this office was ordinarily discharged. This lawyer "stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" His object might have been to perplex and entangle—to involve Christ in a difficulty from which he perceived or hoped that he would be unable to extricate himself. Questions of this kind were often put to Jesus, their very charac.

ter and construction betraying their intent. But the question of the lawyer is not one of this nature. Something more than a mere idle curiosity, or a desire to test the extent of Christ's capacity or knowledge, appears to have prompted it. It is not presented in the bare abstract form. It is not, "Master, what should be done that eternal life be inherited?" but, "Master, what should I do to inherit eternal life? It looks as if it came from one feeling a true, deep, and personal interest in the inquiry.

The manner in which our Lord entertained it confirms this impression. Questions of many kinds from many quarters were addressed to Jesus. With one or two memorable exceptions, they were all answered, but in different ways; whenever any insidious and sinister purpose lay concealed beneath apparent homage, the answer was always such as to show that the latent guile lay open as day to his eye. But there is nothing of that description here. In the first instance, indeed, he will make the questioner go as far as he can in answering his own question. He will tempt—*i. e.*, try or prove him in turn. Knowing that he is a scribe well instructed in the law, he will throw him back upon his own knowledge. Before saying anything about eternal life, or the manner of its inheritance, Jesus says, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" It is altogether remarkable that in answer to a question so very general as this—one which admitted of such various replies—this man should at once have laid his hand upon two texts, standing far apart from each other—the first occurring early in Deuteronomy, the second far on in Leviticus—texts having no connection with each other in the outer form or letter of the law, to which no peculiar or pre-eminent position is there assigned, which are nowhere brought into juxtaposition, nor are quoted as if, when brought together, they formed a summary or compound of the whole; the two very texts, in fact, which, on an after occasion, in answer to another scribe, our Lord

himself cited as the two upon which all the law and the prophets hung. The man who, overlooking the whole mass of ceremonial or ritualistic ordinances as being of altogether inferior consideration, not once to be taken into account when the question was one as to a man's inheriting eternal life, who so readily and so confidently selected these two commandments as containing the sum and substance of the whole, gave good proof how true his reading of the law was. "And Jesus said to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." 'Take but thine own right reading of the law, fulfil aright those two great precepts, Love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, Love thy neighbor as thyself, and thou shalt live; live in loving and in serving, or if thou reachest not in this way the life thou aimest at, thou wilt at least, by the very failure, be taught to look away from the precepts to the promises, and so be led to the true source and fountain of eternal life in the free grace of the Father through me the Son.'

Trying to escape from the awkward position of one out of whose own lips so simple and satisfactory a reply to his own question had been extracted—desiring to justify himself for still appearing as a questioner, by showing that there was yet something about which there remained a doubt—he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" We may fairly assume that one so well read as this man was as to the true meaning of the law, was equally well read as to the popular belief and practice regarding it. He knew what interpretation was popularly put on the expression, "thy neighbor," which stood embodied in the practice of his countrymen. He knew with what supercilious contempt they looked down upon the whole Gentile world around them—calling them the "uncircumcised," the "dogs," the "polluted," the "unclean,"—with what a double contempt they regarded the Samaritans living by their side. He knew that it was no part of the popular belief to regard a Samaritan as a neigh-

bor. So far from this, the Jew would have no dealings with him, cursed him publicly in his synagogue, would not receive his testimony in a court of justice, prayed that he might have no portion in the resurrection. He knew all this—had himself been brought up to the belief and practice. But he was not satisfied with it. Along with that fine instinct of the understanding which had enabled him to extract the pure and simple essence out of the great body of the Jewish code, there was that finer instinct of the heart which taught him that it was within too narrow bounds that the love to our neighbor had been limited. He saw and felt that these bounds should be widened; but how far?—upon what principle, and to what extent? Anxious to know this, he says, “And who is my neighbor?”

Christ answers by what we take to be the recital of an incident that had actually occurred. A fictitious story—a parable invented for the occasion—would not so fully have answered the purpose he had in view. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. We are not told who or what he was; but the conditions and object of the narrative require that he was a Jew. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho—though short, and at certain seasons of the year much frequented—was yet lonely and perilous to the last degree, especially to a single and undefended traveller. It passes through the heart of the eastern division of the wilderness of Judea, and runs for a considerable space along the abrupt and winding sides of a deep and rocky ravine, offering the greatest facilities for concealment and attack. From the number of robberies and murders committed in it, Jews of old called it “the Bloody Road,” and it retains its character still. We travelled it, guarded by a dozen Arabs, who told, by the way, of an English party that the year before had been attacked and plundered and stripped, and we were kept in constant alarm by the scouts sent out beforehand announcing the distant sight of dangerous-looking

Bedouin. All the way from Bethany to the plain of the Jordan is utter solitude—one single ruin, perhaps that of the very inn to which the wounded Jew was carried, being the only sign of human habitation that meets the eye. Somewhere along this road, the solitary traveller of whom Jesus speaks is attacked. Perhaps he carries his all along with him, and, unwilling to part with it, stands upon his defence, wishing to sell life and property as dearly as he can. Perhaps he carries but little—nothing that the thievish band into whose hands he falls much value. Whether it is that a struggle has taken place, or that exasperation at disappointment whets their wrath, the robbers of the wilderness strip their victim of his raiment, wound him, and leave him there half dead. As he lies in that condition on the roadside, first a priest, and then a Levite approaches. A single glance is sufficient for the priest; the Levite stops, and takes a longer, steadier look. The effect in either case is the same—abhorrence and aversion. As men actuated by some other sentiment beyond that of mere insensibility, they shrink back, putting as great a distance as they can between them and the poor naked wounded man; as if there were pollution in proximity—as if the very air around the man were infected—as if to go near him, much more to touch, to lift, to handle him, were to be defiled. To what are we to attribute this? To sheer indifference—to stony-hearted inhumanity? That might explain their passing without a feeling of sympathy excited or a hand of help held out, but it will not explain the quick and sensitive recoil—the passing by on the other side. Is it then the bare horror of the sight that drives them back? If there be something to excite horror, surely there is more to move pity. That naked, quivering body, those gaping, bleeding wounds, the pale and speechless lips, the eyes so dull and heavy with pain, yet sending out such imploring looks—where is the human heart, left free to its own spontaneous actings, they could fail to touch?

But these men's hearts—the hearts of the priest and Levite—are not left thus free: not that their hearts are destitute of the common sympathies of our nature—not that their breasts are steeled against every form and kind of human woe—not that, in other circumstances, they would see a wounded, half-dead neighbor lying, and leave him unpitied and unhelpt. No! but because their hearts—as tender, it may have been, by nature as those of others—have been trained in the school of national and religious bigotry, and have been taught there, not the lesson of sheer and downright inhumanity, but of that narrow exclusiveness which would limit all their sympathies and all their aid to those of their own country and their own faith. The priest and the Levite have been up at Jerusalem, discharging, in their turn, their offices in the Temple. They have got quickened afresh there all the prejudices of their calling; they are returning to Jericho, with all their prejudices strong within their breasts; they see the sad sight by the way; they pause a moment to contemplate it. Had it been a brother priest, a brother Levite, a brother Jew that lay in that piteous plight, none readier to help than they; but he is naked, there is nothing on him or about him to tell who or what he is—he is speechless, and can say nothing for himself. He may be a hated Edomite, he may be a vile Samaritan, for aught that they can tell. The possibility of this is enough. Touch, handle, help such a man! they might be doing thereby a far greater outrage to their Jewish prejudices than they did to the mere sentiment of indiscriminate pity by passing him by, and so they leave him as they find him, in haste to get past the dangerous neighborhood, to congratulate themselves on the wonderful escape they had made—for the wounds of the poor wretch were fresh, and bleeding freely—it could have been but shortly before they came up that the catastrophe had occurred; had they started but an hour or two earlier from Jerusalem his fate might have been theirs. Glad at their own good fortune, they hurry

on, finding many an excuse beside the real one for their neglect.

How then are we exactly to characterize their conduct? It was a triumph of prejudice over humanity—the very kind of error and of crime against which Jesus wished to guard the inquiring lawyer. And it was at once with singular fidelity to nature, and the strictest pertinence to the question with which he was dealing, and to the occasion that called it forth, that it was in the conduct of a priest and of a Levite that this triumph stood displayed—for were they not the fittest types and representatives of that malign and sinister influence which their religion,—misunderstood and misapplied,—had exerted over the common sympathies of humanity? Had they read aright their own old Hebrew code, it would have taught them quite a different lesson. Its broad and genial humanity is one of the marked attributes by which, as compared with that of every other religion then existing, theirs was distinguished. “I will have mercy and not sacrifice,” was the motto which its great Author had inscribed upon its forehead. Its weightier matters were judgment and mercy, and faith and love. It had taken the stranger under its special and benignant protection. Twice over it had proclaimed, “Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or thy brother’s ox fall down by the way and hide thyself from them—thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.” And was a man not much better than an ass or an ox? And should not this priest and Levite—had they read aright their own Jewish law—have lifted up again their prostrate bleeding brother? But they had misread that law. They had misconceived and perverted that segregation from all the other communities of the earth which it had taught the Jewish people to cultivate. Instead of seeing in this temporary isolation the means of distributing the blessings of the Messiah’s kingdom wide over all the earth, they had regarded it as raising them to a position of proud superiority from which they might say to every other nation, “Stand



back, for we are holier than you." And once perverted thus, the whole strength of their religious faith went to intensify the spirit of nationality, and inflame it into a passion, within whose close and sultry atmosphere the lights even of common human kindness were extinguished. It was in a priest and in a Levite that we should expect to see this spirit carried out to its extreme degree, as it has been always in the priestly caste that the fanatical piety which has trampled under foot the kindest sentiments of humanity has shown itself in its darkest and most repulsive form.

After the priest and Levite have gone by, a certain Samaritan approaches. He too is arrested. He too turns aside to look upon this pitiable spectacle. For aught that he can tell, this naked wounded man may be a Jew. There were many Jews and but few Samaritans travelling ordinarily by this road. The chances were a thousand to one that he was a Jew. And this Samaritan must have shared in the common feelings of his people towards the Jews—hatred repaying hatred. But he thinks not of distinction of race or faith. The sight before him of a human being—a brother man in the extremity of distress—swallows up all such thoughts. As soon as he sees him he has compassion on him. He alights—strips off a portion of his own raiment—brings out the oil and the wine that he had provided for his own comfort by the way—tenderly binds up the wounds—gently lifts the body up and places it on his own beast—moves with such gentle pace away as shall least exasperate the recent wounds. Intent upon his task, he forgets his own affairs— forgets the danger of lingering so long in such a neighborhood—is not satisfied till he reaches the inn by the roadside. Having done so much, may he not leave him now? No, he cannot part from him till he sees what a night's rest will do. The morning sees his rescued brother better. Now he may depart. Yes, but not till he has done all he can to secure that he be properly waited on till all danger is over. He may be a humane enough man, the keeper of this inn, but

days will pass before the sufferer can safely travel, and it may not be safe or wise to count upon the continuance of his kindness. The Samaritan gives the innkeeper enough to keep his guest for six or seven days, and tells him that whatever he spends more will be repaid. Having thus done all that the most thoughtful kindness could suggest to promote and secure recovery, he goes to bid his rescued brother farewell. Perhaps the good Samaritan leaves him in utter ignorance of who or what he was. Perhaps those pale and trembling lips are still unable to articulate his thanks—but that parting look in which a heart's whole swelling gratitude goes out—it goes with him and kindles a strange joy. He never saw the sun look half so bright—he never saw the plain of Jordan look half so fair—a happier man than he never trod the road to Jericho. True, he had lost a day, but he had saved a brother; and while many a time in after life the look of that stark and bleeding body, as he first saw it lying on the roadside, would come to haunt his fancy—ever behind it would there come that look of love and gratitude to chase the spectral form away, and fill his heart with light and joy. Here too is a triumph, not one, however, of prejudice over humanity, but of humanity over prejudice. For it were idle to think that it was because of any superiority over the priest and the Levite in his abstract ideas of the sphere of neighborhood, and of the claims involved in simple participation of humanity, that this Samaritan acted as he did. No, it was simply because he obeyed the impulses of a kind and loving heart, and that these were strong enough to lift him above all those prejudices of tribe and caste and faith, to which he, equally with the Jew, was liable.

And was there not good reason for it, that in the records of our Christian faith, in the teachings of its Divine Author, one solemn warning of this kind should be lifted up—one illustrious example of this kind should be exhibited? Our Redeemer came to establish another and closer bond of brotherhood than the earth before had known, to knit all

true believers in the pure and holy fellowship of a common faith, a common hope, a common heirship of eternal life through him. But he would have us from the beginning know that this bond, so new, so sacred, so divine, was never meant to thwart or violate that other broader universal tie that binds the whole family of our race together, that makes each man the neighbor of every other-man that tenants this earthly globe. Christianity, like Judaism, has been perverted,—perverted so as seriously to interfere with, sometimes almost entirely to quench, the sentiment of an universal philanthropy; but it has been so only when its true genius and spirit have been misapprehended; for of all influences that have ever descended upon our earth, none has ever done so much to break down the walls of separation that differences of country, language, race, religion, have raised between man and man, and to diffuse the spirit of that brotherly love which overleaps all these temporary and artificial fences and boundary lines—which, subject to no law of limits, is a law itself—which, like the air and light of heaven, diffuses itself everywhere around over the broad field of humanity—tempering all, uniting all, brightening all, smoothing asperities, harmonizing discords, pouring a healing balm into all the rankling sores of life.

“Which now of the three,” said Jesus to the lawyer, “was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves?”

Ashamed to say plainly “The Samaritan,” yet unwilling or unable to exhibit any hesitation in his reply, he said, “He that showed mercy on him.” Then said Jesus unto him, “Go, and do thou likewise.” It is not “Listen and applaud,” it is “Go and do.” If there be anything above another that distinguishes the conduct of the good Samaritan, it is its thoroughly practical character. He wasted no needless sympathy, he shed no idle tears. There are wounds that may be dressed,—he puts forth his own hand immediately to the dressing of them. There is a life that may be saved,—he sets himself to use every method by which it may be

saved. He gives more than time, more than money: he gives personal service. And that is the true human charity that shows itself in prompt, efficient, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing help. You can get many soft, susceptible, sentimental spirits to weep over any scene or tale of woe. But it is not those who will weep the readiest over the sorrow will do the most to relieve it. Sympathy has its own selfishness; there is a luxury in the tears that it loves idly to indulge. Tears will fill the eye—should fill the eye—but the hand of active help will brush them away, that the eye may see more clearly what the hand has to do. Millions have heard or read the tale of the Good Samaritan. Their eyes have glistened and their hearts have been all aglow in approving, applauding sympathy; but of all these millions, how many are there who imitate the example given, who have given a day from their business to a suffering brother, who have waited by the sick, and with their own hand have ministered to his wants?

The beauty and force of that special lesson which the story of the Good Samaritan was intended to convey, is mightily enhanced as we remember how recently our Lord himself had suffered from the intolerance of the Samaritans; only a few days before, we know not how few, having been refused entrance into one of their villages. He himself then gave an exhibition of the very virtue he designed to inculcate. But why speak of this as any single minor act of universal love to mankind on his part? Was not his life and death one continuous manifestation of that love? Yes, bright as that single act of the Good Samaritan shines in the annals of human kindness, all its brightness fades away in the full blaze of that love of Jesus, which saw not a single traveller, but our whole race, cast forth naked, bleeding, dying, and gave not a day of his time, nor a portion of his raiment, but a whole lifetime of service and of suffering, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life.

## XLVI.

### THE HEALING WATERS.

PUNSHON.

[Perhaps—by popular approval—the first in eloquence of living Wesleyan ministers is WILLIAM MORLEY PUNSHON, D.D. He was born at Doncaster, in Yorkshire, May 29th 1824, and spent his youth as clerk in a counting-house. At eighteen he exhorted spiritedly as a local preacher, and soon received a pastoral charge. In 1851 he was called to Sheffield, and a few years later his fame secured him the prize of a London pastorate. His discourses are carefully thought out and elaborated in all details, committed exactly to memory, and are delivered with a vim and magnetic power which captivate the feelings and entrance the wills of his hearers. He accepted the presidency of the Conference of the Canadian Wesleyan Church, and of the University at Toronto, Canada, in 1868. This sermon was delivered in St. Paul's M. E. Church, New York, the following year.]

*"And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh."*—Ezekiel xlvii. 9.

THE last clause of the verse is that to which I especially direct your attention: "And everything shall live whither the river cometh."

I have somewhere seen a picture which, in brief words and from dim memories only, I will endeavor to describe. The scene is in the far East, the hour just when the earth is lighted up with that rare Oriental sunrise which we Westerns love to see; the time, the sultry August, when the fierce sun has it all his own way, and when the earth has a sickly cast upon it, as if it fainted almost beneath the intensity of the glare; the plain is scorched and arid, the river pressing within its sedgy banks seems to have hardly strength enough

to propel its sluggish stream. There, on an eminence, beneath a group of ancestral palms, is a knot of Egyptian peasants, swarthy and muscular, their eyes strained wildly towards the south, in which quarter there seems to be an indescribable haze, forecasting the shadow of some atmospheric or other change. Why wait they there so eagerly? Why is their gaze fastened distinctly upon the point where the river glimmers faintly on the horizon's dusky forehead? Because they are conscious from the experience of years, that the time has come for the inundation of the Nile. They do not know how it will be swelled: they are not able to tell the source from which the tribute is distilled, how in the far Abyssinia it gathers its volume of waters; but as certainly as if their knowledge was profound and scientific, they calculate upon the coming flood. And they know, too, that when the flood does come, that arid plain shall wave with ripening grain; there shall be corn in Egypt, and those blackened pastures will be gay with such fertile plenty that the whole land shall eat and be satisfied, "for everything shall live whither the river cometh." So marvellous shall be the transformation that the Turkish description of the Egyptian climate shall almost hold good: that for three months it is white like pearl, for three months brown like musk, for three months green like emerald, for three months yellow like gold.

This picture has struck me as furnishing us with a very graphic representation of Ezekiel's vision embodied in the experience of Eastern life. Nothing certainly can better image the moral barrenness of the world and the wilderness of sin than that plain upon which the consuming heat has alighted, withering the green herb and inducing the dread of famine. Nothing can better set forth the life and healing of the Gospel of Christ than the flow of that blessed life-giving river; and nothing can better show the attitude befitting all earnest Christian men than the attitude of these

peasants, eager and earnest, watching the first murmurings of the quiescent waters that they might catch and spread the joy.

There is, of course, a spiritual application of the vision, which appears to have been intended in the glowing language of Ezekiel, and that spiritual application is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, made effectual by the Holy Ghost for the healing and for the salvation of men. You remember that, under the same similitude, the Gospel is frequently presented to us in the pages of the Word. After the similitude of living water, its blessings were promised to the Samaritan woman; the stranger who lifted up his voice in the feast said that in the heart of each believer there should be a fountain springing up into everlasting life; and in identity between the seer of the Old Testament and the evangelist of the New, John saw a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. We do not err, therefore, if we present to you these holy waters as emblematic of the scheme of perfected atonement, made vital by the Spirit of God, and adapted for the salvation of men. In this aspect of it, meditation for a few moments upon the source, the progress, and the efficacy of the healing waters, will not be out of place to-day.

There is said to have been a copious fountain upon the west side of the city of Jerusalem. At this fountain, which was called Gihon, Zadok and Abiathar, priests of the Lord, stood by the side of the youthful Solomon, and, with many holy solemnities, proclaimed him king. The prudent Hezekiah, foreseeing that in time of war its waters might be cut off by an enemy, conducted them by a secret aqueduct into the city. David found in the purifying virtues of the fountain one of his choicest inspirations when he struck his harp and sang, "There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place, the tabernacle of the Most

High." Now, it may be that there was some subtle connection of thought between this fountain and the vision which floated before the senses of Ezekiel, as the stream was from the foundations of the temple, and from the foundations of the holy house in the vision the prophet saw the healing waters spring. Be this as it may, the truth is significant to us that through the temple come to us the tidings of blessing, that the tidings do not originate in the temple, but have their source and origin that is invisible and afar.

In God's provision for the restoration of the fallen race there are both instrumentalities and efficient agencies. He has appointed means, and although there is no innate power in means as God's appointed channels of blessing, they are not to be despised. There is not now, as in the Jewish dispensation, any central spot where the holy oracles exclusively speak and where religion preserves its most precious and hallowed memories; the prestige and the sacredness of the old Jerusalem have passed away for ever, but the means of grace are invested with a sacredness that is peculiarly their own. There are special promises of favor yet for those who wait upon God and for those who call upon his name. They deprive themselves of a large inheritance of blessing, and are deeply criminal withal, who forsake the assembling of themselves together in the place where the ordinance of preaching is celebrated, where the sacraments are duly administered, and where prayer is wont to be made. The ordinances of religion may be, and very often are, observed only with external decorum. The song may be the formal verse, the prayer may be lip-service merely, and the whole service may be a Sabbath compromise with conscience and for a week's indulgence in sin, but to the true-hearted and to the contrite, it is from the temple that the healing waters flow.

The heart, ignorant of God and of its own duty, dimly conscious that the reconciliation for which it pants must



come to it through the merits of another, hears of him in the temple, and is glad. The contrite one, loathing his former practices of iniquity, bows tearfully in the temple as he says, "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight, and thou hatest all the workers of iniquity; but as for me, I will worship toward thy holy temple." Here, as in a spiritual laver sea, the polluted soul is cleansed by the washing of water and the word. Here the poor children of sin smile through their tears as they are satisfied with the goodness of his house, and the lame halts no longer as he emerges from this Bethesda of the paralyzed whose waters have been sent from on high. It is between the cherubim that God especially shines; it is among the golden candlesticks that God walks to bless his people. Here, as in a gorgeous and well-furnished hall of banqueting, believers eat of the fatness of his house and drink of the river of his pleasure; in the temple is at once the highest instruction, the sweetest comfort, the closest fellowship with God, and the amplest preparation for heaven.

Brethren, your presence in the temple this morning proves that the way to it is a familiar road to you—but do you love its courts? are they homes to you—homes of endearment and of blessing? "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." A gate more than a house—that is the Lord's arithmetic in reference to the temples of his presence. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Are your likes like his? or like his servant's—the holy psalmist—"that you may dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple," as the oracle where your eager minds may discover the perfection of truth, as a shrine where your enamored hearts may behold the perfection of beauty? Oh! they who love the temple are the likeliest, standing on its banks, to trace the

source of it as it issues from the throne. So much for the instrumental agency.

While we appreciate the advantages of the temple, while we rejoice in the flow of the healing waters, we must remember always that they issue from the foundations of the house, and that their springs are in the everlasting hills. In other words, that God is the only source of life, and that means, unless he vitalizes them, are but the letter that killeth—the shadow of good things to come. You are sufficiently instructed in the things of God to know that he has confided the great work of human redemption to no agency that is less powerful than his own; for, while the atheist cannot find God, while the deist is deaf to his revelation, and while the pantheist reduces him to an abstraction, the heart of a good woman leaps up within her at remembering that all around her there is God—a living, personal, omnipotent, gracious God.

One of the glorious beliefs which fence round our own individual faith, as with a rampart of impregnable strength, is this: that ever since the revelation of Christianity, this tear-stricken world of ours has been not many days orphaned of a present God. In olden time, God spake to the world in symbol, in vision, by thunder and by fire; but even amid the comparative dimness of the Mosaic economy, the Son of God, as if impatient to begin his great work of redemption, paid preliminary visits to the scene of his future incarnation, and took upon him the form of an angel, while yet the fullness of time had not come for him to take upon him the form of a man. In the days of his flesh, he perfected the work of atonement by one offering for sins for ever, needing no repetition, losing none of its rich crimson through the lapse of years. By one offering for ever, he gave the world at once its sublimest morality and its most spotless example; vanquished death by dying, and gave the proof of the victory by the resurrection out of a baffled tomb, and then,

having furnished the instrument of propagation, and having promised the agent of propagation, he ascended up on high.

Through the interval, heavy and trying to the expectant twelve, but not many days according to the calendar, the promise of the Father bridged over the chasm between the ascent of the Son and the descent of the Spirit. It was a solemn hush, like the stern silence that reigns along the line of battle between the hoarse word of command and the fierce onslaught upon the foe. The Saviour had said upon the cross, "It is finished," and, as a token that it was finished—a token that neither men nor devils could gainsay—he snatched up the thief by his side, and took him with him as the first fruits of the Pentecost; and then, when he had chosen his disciples, and furnished them with every qualification for their great work, what was his language? Strange scene! "Go! but tarry. Do not march undisciplined and without a leader. Wait until, like the mysterious stranger that appeared before the camp of Gideon, the Captain of the Lord's host shall come. Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." And suddenly and richly that baptism of fire came—fell upon the anointed ones in the upper room, was kindled by their instrumentality in many hearts in Jerusalem, and has gone burning on until now. Oh! do you not see the fullness and the richness of the provision? The world could not be trusted without a God in it, and so, not many days after, God the Son went up, and God the Spirit came down. The issues pending were so solemn, the results of failure would have been so appalling to the universe of God, that there must be a present Deity in order to carry on the great work in the world; and so, while the atheist cannot find God, while the deist is deaf to his revelation, and while the pantheist deprives him of his personality, here is God, the Holy Ghost, as the Christian's living representative of God, as the great Inspirer, not of the ancient seers only, but of

the modern truth, and as the great, constant, living Agent in the conviction and in the conversion of souls.

Brethren, so soon as Christ had ascended up on high, the fullness of the Spirit came down. Is it not a comforting truth: "We believe in the Holy Ghost"? Is there any one who would wish us to blot that article out of our creed? Was there ever a time when it was more necessary for us to affirm it to the teeth of men, and in the face of hostile confederacies of error and of scorn? "We believe in the Holy Ghost." What else would assure our confidence amid the insolence of error and the haughtiness of scorn, amid the craft of demon hate and hostile conspiracies of evil, amid the audacious wickedness of our own hearts, amid earth's fickle people and earth's banded kings? What else would fortify our trust in the word, which has within it every element of opposition to ungodliness, but no element of triumph over evil?

Men say that truth is power. It is not: alone, it is as feeble as the pliant osier or as the bruised reed against the banded malignity of men; but let the Spirit come into it, and then it overcomes speedily, is brave, and is mighty to prevail. Brethren, that Spirit is in the truth which I preach in your hearing to-day. He has promised to apply the truth to every conscience and to every heart. Let us honor him by asking for his presence. Prayer will be a profitless litany, praise will be a foolish tinkling of cymbals, and our whole devotional service will be a bootless trouble unless he come down in the midst of us with his inspiration and with his blessing. We shall still dishonor God, we shall still be greedy to do evil, we shall still follow in the trail of the serpent, we shall still fall into a recompense of doom, unless the Holy Spirit inspire us. The prayer of the stammerer will be eloquent, the most tuneless strain a doxology, and the meanest offering an acceptable sacrifice, if only he inspire them; the darkness of the ignorant shall be enlightened,

the distress of the contrite shall be soothed, the way of the perplexed shall be straitened, the wound of the apostate shall be healed, and visions of brightness shall break upon the dulled eyes of the dying, if only the Divine Spirit—God the Holy Ghost—be there. Here, then, are the instrumental and efficient agencies for the propagation of the Gospel of Christ—the flowing river, and the source of the river. “Everything shall live whither the river cometh.” It issues out of the temple; but its springs are away from the foundation of the house, far off in the everlasting hills.

Let us notice, secondly, for a moment or two, the progress of the healing waters. You notice that in the vision the progress of it is presented to us as gradual and constant. The prophet saw the waters flowing first to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and then it was a river that could not be passed over; even a river for a man to swim in. The progress was gradual and constant. There was no ceasing of the flow; there was no ebbing of the waters; they gradually and constantly flowed in an ever-deepening stream. This is a description of the Gospel of Christ, small and feeble in its beginnings. Trembling but earnest fishermen were its first preachers; wealth, rank, patronage, and power were all arrayed against it; Cæsars conspired to strangle it, and armies marched out against its fugitive sons.

How marvellous was its triumph! Think of the rapidity of its original spread! Jerusalem filled with the doctrine; Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Athens, Rome, all trembling beneath its denunciations of their vices within a century of its Founder’s death. “We are but of yesterday,” says Tertullian in his apology, “and we have filled your cities, islands, towns, and boroughs; the camp, the senate, and the forum.” Writers of the second century speak of the whole world of the Roman Empire as filled with the doctrine of Christ, and it is known that Constantine placed

the cross upon the imperial banners, establishing Christianity as the religion of the state, and at the close of the fourth century, when Julian gasped out his celebrated dying cry, it was not the apostate only, it was the world that the Galilean had overcome: and although after the establishment of Christianity, there came an eclipse of faith, and blemishes disfigured somewhat the comeliness of the bride of Christ, yet its gradual progress among the nations did not cease. One after another they heard its tidings and submitted to its sway; insensibly it moulded the institutions of society and stamped upon them its own beauteous image; sanguinary codes were relaxed, unholy traffic was terminated, cruelty had its arm paralyzed and its sword blunted; fraud, lust, and drunkenness became no longer things of glorying, but things of shame; and there was a gradual uplifting in the moral health, as if men felt the bracing air-waves of a new atmosphere, and they wondered whence the healing came.

Oh! it was the river that did it all, flowing on, now in the gurgling brook, and now on the open plain, now fertilizing the swards upon its banks, and now rejoicing in the depths of its own channel, imperceptible almost in the increasing volume of its waters to those who gazed upon it every day, but to those who gazed upon it only at intervals, seeming to be widening and deepening every hour that it has rolled. And it is rolling still. Perhaps there never was an age of such quickened activity and privilege as the age in which we live. Here and there and yonder there have been manifestations of the healing power of the Gospel. You see the cloud rising and bursting over this and over that hill of Zion, in plenteous showers of blessing. Is it not so? Churches that for years have been languid have been quickened into a warmth of life which has astonished them, and the heart of old formalities has been smitten like the rock of Horeb, and the crystal waters have flowed forth even in

the wilderness to rejoice the hearts of men. Ministers who have toiled disheartened, for years and years sowing the seed, as they fancied, upon the rock where it baffled the skill of the husbandman, have been bringing their sheaves with the reaper's bursting gladness, and everything has told that the moral summer of the world has been coming. And what is it all? Oh! just the flowing of the ancient river coming past our homesteads, its waters sparkling in the healing sun, and the melody of the daughters of music on its banks, making glad the city of our God.

Now, brethren, if this be so, there are two solemn thoughts here. Do not rejoice in the progress and forget the application: the one encourages our trust, the other reminds us of our responsibility. If it be really so that God has appointed that this Gospel should spread and progress in the world, and if we get fastened into our spirits a conviction that this Gospel shall and must triumph, the only thing for us to mind is that we are in the partnership, in order that, as workers together with God, we may be sure and have our share in the recompense when the sowers and the reapers shall rejoice together. Oh! if we could only get this thought fastened into our spirits, we should be preserved from unusual elation in the time of apparent prosperity, and from unusual depression in times of apparent languor. Opposition may crumble into dust, or, like mountains of ice, may melt before the warmth of the sun, while public opinion, changeful ever and always, may applaud the heroism or laugh at the fanaticism of the Church; legislation may benefit or may brand godliness (it has done both, and it will do both again with equal heartiness and with equal facility); the choicest of the Church's youth may press into the ranks of the ministry, with a holy emulation to be baptized for the dead, or it may leave the ministry to be recruited from the ranks of the comparatively mean and unlettered, themselves preferring opulence and lettered ease; the spirit of revival

may spread like a beacon blaze from hill to hill, or it may be thwarted by indifference, or thwarted equally by the excesses or fanaticism of its votaries; good men may fall in quick succession out of Zion—but the Gospel goes on through all vicissitudes; it wins its widening way; it is never languid, although its advocates fail; it marches with the ages, or they wonder at finding it ahead of them in the great course of civilization, progress, freedom, and heavenly endeavor. Its doctrines never become antiquated, its face never shrivels up, and just as it was in the beginning, it is to-day. Time writes no wrinkle on its azure brow; there is immortal youth about it, and a fitness for the world of the nineteenth, as for the third, century. There is no modern error that can set itself up insolently without meeting the fate of Dagon before the ancient Ark.

Christianity can be trusted by the world to-day as by the world of the early apostolic age; there is nothing can master it; there is nothing can retard or overcome it. It can gather its triumphs still, just as it was wont to do, from the very dregs and refuse of society; and if it wants its choicest apostle, it can take hold of the blasphemer, the persecutor, and the injurious man, and lift him up into an apostleship, higher than they all. It saves sinners still; it comforts believers now; it shines with sweetest lustre in the chamber of affliction, and its praises are gasped from pale beds of death. Oh! you can trust the Gospel! If you believe that it is destined to prevail, and that the power of the Holy Ghost within it shall never suffer it to die, then, calm and free from tumult, catch somewhat of the spirit of the Master. All the troubles of the world do not affect him. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down." Men do not sit when their work is going on; they are standing as long as there is anxiety about that. But "this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down, expecting."



O the sublimity of that imperial quiet! "The heathen rage" down below; it does not move him. He sits "expecting." "The kings of the earth take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed." Not a muscle of his face moves; he sits "expecting." "The people" (worse than all external opposition), the people themselves, "imagine a vain thing." He that sits in the heaven still sits expecting until his enemies be made his footstool. He knows that the end will come; he has done his work, and he is satisfied; already he sees before him of the travail of his soul, and the duty of imperial quiet which the Master has assumed should be the attitude so far as the anticipation of the future triumph of the Gospel is concerned, of the Master's people too. You will not be discouraged if your faith is strong, and if, with a living personality of consciousness, you believe in the Holy Ghost.

Well, then, the second thought reminds you of your responsibility. How impressively it comes upon you! Being heirs of such a heritage as this, born in such a day of privilege, around which so many solemn associations and beliefs gather, surely there must be responsibility devolving upon us; for it is a law of God's government that wherever there is power, there is a use and a mission for that power. Oh! it is a great thing to live in times like these, but it is a greater thing to be fit to live in times like these. It is impossible to live in such an age, an age when no ordinary privileges are enjoyed, when there is a special unction attending the ministration of the word, where there are large and manifest workings of the Holy Ghost, without entailing an added responsibility to do anything which our fathers have done. We are the Chorazins and the Bethsaldas of the present in whom all God's mighty works are done, and if the ancient Capernaum has a successor at all, it will be surely in the nations where the light of Gospel truth has long been shining, and where the country spreads her ægis over the worshippers, that none may dare to make them afraid.

The question, then, presses itself upon all: Am I holier, am I more spiritually-minded, do I get heavenlier by my privilege day by day? The waters have been flowing past my homestead for years and years; am I perishing or thirsting by their side? Have I never stooped to drink them yet? Brethren, the waters wear the stones (that is a wonderful passage); but they are stones still, although worn. The waters do not change their nature, and what water cannot change it petrifies. Have you never heard of the dropping wells that have been outpouring continually for years, converting the mosses upon the shelvy rock into the richest emerald that your eyes ever gazed upon? But what is the ground underneath? Cold, hard stone. And there are some consciences that have sat so long under the sound of the Gospel, that they shall never be broken, not even by the hammer of the Word. May God save us from such a doom! These thoughts have come, almost when I did not reckon of them, in reference to the efficacy of these healing waters. It is not necessary, therefore, for me at any length to enlarge. It has been almost impossible to avoid allusion to them in a former part of the discourse. The places, however, into which the waters flowed are very striking. They did not direct their course into spots that were very slightly defective, and, therefore, very readily healed; they did not impart a partial and temporary life under very favorable circumstances. They flowed into the desert and into the sea; into the desert where no stream had flowed before; into the Dead Sea in whose sad, sluggish waters nothing which had breath could live. Thus their mission was to supply all that was lacking, and to purify all that was impure.

How complete and effectual the healing! "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." And this is true of the Gospel of Christ. There is no desert of worldliness anywhere which the Gospel cannot turn into a garden; there is no Dead Sea of error which the Gospel cannot purge from its pollution and transform into a receptacle

of life. The completeness of the healing is one of the most agreeable of its characteristics, and furnishes to those who rejoice in it their loftiest materials of praise. The world is a vast valley—a valley of the dead, without motion, without strength, without hope; but there is not one of those unburied corpses that may not be quickened into life. “Everything”—am I bold to affirm it?—“everything may live whither the river cometh!” The Gospel has life in it for all. Its voice can reach to the furthest wards of the sepulchre, and there is no catacomb that is too remote, too crowded, or too loathsome to be visited and to be emptied; however long death may have had sway, the Gospel can chase it from the heart—ay, though time may have resolved the dust into dust again, and though the soul, like a mummy of the Pharaohs, may be swathed in its embalmment for many centuries of years, everything shall live whither the river cometh.

Not only may each man be brought under the influence, but each part of each man may be redeemed: light for the understanding, that it may no longer be darkened by the clouds of speculative error; light for the imagination, that it may quench its strange fires in the blood of the Lamb and snatch from the altar of his cross a brighter and more hallowed flame; light for the memory, that it may be haunted no longer by the ghostly scenes and spectral thoughts of evil, but that it may hoard with miser’s care every fraction of knowledge and transform it into an argument for God; life for the affections, that they may spend the bloom of their intensity of love on an object upon which they can expatiate without fear of idolatry, and without fear either of treachery or change; life for the whole nature, that it may rise from the death of sin into the better life of God; life for the soul, that it may not be sullied even by the shadow of death, but that, in the pure white light of the Redeemer’s presence, it may go upward and upward into the sacred, high, eternal noon of heaven. “Everything shall

live whither the river cometh." It shall flow into the desert, the life of God shall be implanted in the wilderness, and the whole nature shall be so turned about, that the barrenness shall become a bloom. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off." It shall flow into the sea, and though the proud waters resist its influence, it shall overcome their frantic billows, and in spite of them shall heal it of its plague.

Some of you may have seen what I conceive to be an illustration of this, as I have seen, in nature's bounteous kingdom. I stood some years ago, on a bright summer's day, at the meeting of the waters near the city of Geneva, where two rivers meet, but do not mingle, the Aar and the Rhone. One with its beautiful water of heavenly blue, which it is almost worth a pilgrimage to see, and the other muddy, partly from the glaciers, of which it is largely composed, and partly from the clay soil which it upheaves, come meeting together from two several points. For miles and miles they go, with no barrier between them except their own innate repulsions; they meet, but do not mingle. Now and then one makes a slight encroachment into the province of the other, but is speedily beaten back again; like mighty rival forces of good and evil do they seem, and for a long while the struggle is doubtful; but if you will look far down the valley, into a quiet little nook, you find the Rhone has mastered, and covered the whole surface of the river with its own emblematic and beautiful blue. I thought, as I stood there and gazed, that there was a grand illustration of the ultimate triumph of truth over error; and in meditating upon this vision of Ezekiel, and reading that those healing waters shall flow into the sea and heal it, the scene rose up before me fresh and vivid, as if I had seen it yesterday, and as my own faith was confirmed, and my own apprehension quickened by the memory, I have sought in these

few words to impart some of the vividness of the apprehension to you. "Everything!"—oh! it is a beautiful thought, and I can rest in it because God has spoken it, otherwise the plague of my own heart would weigh me down; otherwise the great, the giant temptations that impart to my soul a struggling bitterness which no stranger may know, might well cause me to despond—"everything shall live whither the river cometh." No impurity, no leprosy, no death which cannot be healed by the flowing of this life-giving river.

There is hope for every one of you. Perhaps there has straggled into this room this morning some one whose life has been a treason and an outrage upon all the traits of humanity; some one who is looked upon even by society around him as a very Pariah, whom a high-caste Brahmin would hardly stoop to look upon, and would gather up the fringes of his robes as he passed him by, but to whom, as I speak this morning, the Holy Spirit has come, and has impressed upon him a strange, strong agony of desire to repent and reform. My brother, there is hope for thee, though thou hast far gone in evil; though thou hast blasphemed thy Maker, and trampled under foot the blood of the covenant, counting it an unholy thing; though thou hast gone so far that thou art almost standing upon the verge of the bottomless pit; though the ground is unsteady as if an earthquake slumbered beneath it; though the yell of demon voices sounds hoarsely in the distance, and the tramp of demon feet appears to be coming nearer and nearer, exultingly to claim thee as their prey—now in this crisis of your fate, one cry, one upward glance of penitence and faith, the silent whisper of prayer, and He who gives that penitence and imparts that faith will lift thee up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay; he will set thy feet upon the rock of ages; will lift thee up higher that thou mayest sit in heavenly places in Christ, so that all the world, looking

at thee and at the Saviour who has delivered thee, may say: "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" Who of you will accept of this salvation now? "Everything shall live whither the river cometh."

Some of you have already rejoiced in the life and healing of the waters. You know that they issue from the foundation of the house, and that it is in the temple you are to find some of their channels. By God's blessing, those of you who love the Lord, and have taken upon you the vows of discipleship, are here this morning to receive the tokens of a Father's love, in the Father's house, at the Father's table. He blesses and sustains you at home; he consecrates the frugal board, and makes it often a banquet; and what is there that he will refuse to you in his own house, and on his own day, and at his own table? You are coming into his house now—his banqueting hall—and his banner over you is love.

The communion that you are to celebrate this morning is not a test of membership in the Church; it is the feast of the faithful, when the Father spreads the board, and all the sons and daughters come round, and feel the pleasure of his countenance. "They joy before thee according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." Come and renew your faith again; come and pay your vows again! When David, in the olden time, was bewildered with the multitude of God's mercies, and said, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" how soon he came to the answer: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." May he descend in the fullness of his real presence, and let us all feel that the world is not to-day orphaned of a God! Amen.

## XLVII.

### NICODEMUS: THE SEEKER AFTER RELIGION.

CHAPIN.

[EDWIN HUBBELL CHAPIN, D. D., by eloquence of thought, imagination and language ranking among the foremost preachers and lecturers of America, was born in Union Village, Washington county, New York, in 1814. After a ministry of several years in Charlestown, Massachusetts, he was called to his present pastorate over the Fourth Universalist Church, New York City. He is the author of many volumes of Sermons, all of which are deservedly popular. These comprise: "Crown of Thorns;" "Discourses on the Lord's Prayer;" "Duties of Young Men;" "Duties of Young Women;" "Providence and Life;" "Characters in the Gospels." Our extract is made by permission from the last named.]

*"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night."—John iii. 1, 2.*

ALTHOUGH we have but few glimpses of Nicodemus in the Gospels, he is a personage of peculiar interest. A Pharisee, and a member of the great Jewish Senate, or Sanhedrin, he shows us that the influence of Christ was not limited to the poor and the obscure; but that, while his Words and Works awoke enmity and fear among the higher classes, they struck, in the breasts of some of these, a holier chord.

It may not be certain that Nicodemus ever openly confessed Christ; yet, in this chapter, he appears in the attitude of a disciple, and we find him defending Jesus before the Sanhedrin, and assisting at his burial. Still, unless the last-mentioned act be considered as such, we do not discover, in his conduct, that public and decisive acknowledgment which the Saviour required; we do not behold the frank avowal of Peter, or the intrepidity of Paul. There is an air of caution and of timidity about him. He carefully feels

the ground of innovation, before he lets go the establishment; and, indeed, he appears to have taken no step by which he forfeited his caste or his office. It is difficult, too, to discover the precise purpose of this visit to Jesus. Perhaps he sought the interview from mixed motives. A religious earnestness, kindled by the teachings and the character of Christ, may have blended with speculative curiosity, and even with the throbbings of political ambition. His coming by night, too, may have indicated timidity, or he may have chosen that season as the best time for quiet and uninterrupted discourse. But, whatever may have been his motives, the position in which we find him shows, I repeat, that the power of Christ's ministry was felt, not only by the excitable multitude, but by the more thoughtful and devout of the Jewish people.

Nicodemus, however, presents a peculiar interest, not only because he exhibits the influence of Jesus upon the higher orders of his nation, but because he appears as a *Seeker after Religion*, and as one personally interested in its vital truths. His interview with the Saviour, gives occasion for one of the most important passages in the New Testament. The conversation of Christ, in this instance, is not uttered in general principles and accommodated to the multitude, but it is directed to an intelligent and inquiring spirit, in the calm privacy of the night-time, laying bare its very depths, and craving the application of religion to its own peculiar wants. To be sure, Nicodemus did not profess this want, but commenced the conversation with the language of respect, and with suggestion of more general inquiry. But he who "knew what was in man," had already penetrated the folds of the Ruler's breast, and saw the real need that had sent him; so, putting by all compliments, and all secondary issues, he struck at once the conscious chord that throbbed there, and exclaimed: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of



God!" There words must have filled Nicodemus with surprise, both from their sudden *heart-searchingness*, and as addressing to him a term which was usually applied to men of very different condition. For the phrase, "*new birth*," was a customary one to express the change through which the Gentile passed in becoming a Jew. But it was indeed a strange doctrine that he, a son of Abraham, a Pharisee, a Ruler, must be born again, before he could be fit for the Messiah's kingdom. Therefore, really or affectedly, he misunderstood the Saviour's words, and gave to a phrase, plain enough when applied to a heathen, the most gross and literal interpretation. But Christ reiterated the solemn truth, assuring him that an *inward change*, and an *outward profession*, a regeneration of the affections and the will, and a renunciation of pride and fear, by the symbol of baptism—a new birth of water and of the Spirit—was essential to true discipleship. And thus, stripping away all the reliances of formal righteousness, and all the supports of birth and position, in reply to the earnest question of Nicodemus: "How can these things be?" the great Teacher proceeded to utter some of the sublimest doctrines of the Gospel. As I have already said, whether Nicodemus became an avowed follower of Jesus, or not, is uncertain; but we know that the truths which he then heard are of everlasting importance, have a personal application to every man, and appeal to wants in our own souls, which are as real and as deep as those of the Ruler of old.

But while thus Nicodemus exhibits a need of our common humanity, he especially represents a class who may be called "Seekers after Religion," either as being unsettled and inquiring in their spirits, or as resting upon something which is not Religion, but only, perhaps, a tendency toward it—they are seekers after it, as not having actually found it. In other words, for this class, Religion has its meaning and its pressure; they think about it, and they feel its claims, yet

they do not thoroughly and mentally know it; or, like Nicodemus, they rest upon some substitute. Some of these positions I propose now to illustrate.

I observe, then, in the first place, that some seek Religion in *Rituals* and *Sacraments*. The tendency of the human mind, as to matters of faith and devotion, has always been to complicate rather than to simplify, and to associate these with set forms and symbols. In all ages, men have shrunk from naked communion with God, from the solitude of an intense spirituality, and have conducted transactions with the Invisible, through the mediation of ceremony. But that which, at first, was an expression of the individual soul, has grown into a fixed and consecrated Rite. Gestures and modes of worship, suggested by the occasion, have been repeated in usage, and grown venerable with age, until they have become identified with Religion itself. They have been exalted into mystic vehicles of Grace, have been considered as possessing virtue in themselves, and as constituting an awful paraphernalia, through which, alone, God will deign to communicate with man, and through which man may even propitiate and move God. Christianity has not escaped this tendency; and, even now, there are many with whom the Sacraments are something more than expressive signs and holy suggestions, and with whom the position of an altar, the shape of a vestment, and the form of a church are among the *essentials* of Religion. With such, Baptism speaks, not merely to the eye of an inward washing, but it is of itself a regenerative process. In their view, the Communion Bread is not simply a representation of the broken body of the Redeemer; but is itself so sacred, so identical with that body, that they must receive it by a special posture, and upon a particular part of the hand. As a matter of course, to such, Religion must appear eminently conservative and retrospective; the genius of the established and the past, rather than of the reformatory and the future. Cherishing

the minutest fibres of these ancient rites; they chiefly venerate the men who authenticate them, and the soil out of which they grow. With them, the fluent spirit of Religion became organized and fixed into a form, with fast-days and feast-days, with mitre and cassock, and a lineal priesthood, ages ago.

It cannot be said that this method is entirely unfounded. It has its justification in human nature, if not elsewhere. There are those who can find peace only in the arms of an hereditary Faith: who can feel the inspiration of worship only among forms that have kindled worship in others for a thousand years: with whose earliest thoughts and dearest memories is entwined a Ritual and an Established Church, so that personal affection and household sanctity, as well as religious feeling, demand that every great act of life—of joy or sorrow—should be consecrated by the familiar sacrament. For that church, too, their fathers have died in darker times, and beneath its chancels, sainted mothers moulder into dust. All, too, that can exalt the ideal, or wake the pulses of eloquent emotion, is connected with such a church. To them it opens a traditional perspective, the grandest in all history. Behind its altars, sweep the vestments of centuries of priests, and rises the incense of centuries of prayer. In its stony niches, stand rows of saints, who have made human life sublime, and who, through all the passing ages, look down upon the turmoil of that life with the calm beatitude of heaven; while its flushed windows still keep the blood-stain of its own martyrs, plashed against it ere yet it had become an anchored fact, and while it tossed upon the stormy waves of persecution. I can understand, then, how an imaginative and reverential mind can find the truest religious life only in connection with Ritual and Sacrament.

I can understand, moreover, the reaction in this direction, which is taking place at the present day. It is the retreat of the Religious sentiments from the despotism of an impe-

rious reason. It is the counter-protest of loyal affections against what is deemed an anarchical tendency. It is the clinging of men's sympathies to the concrete, alarmed by the irreverent and analytic methods of science. It is the retirement of faith and devotion to those cloistered sanctities that shut out the noise of the populace, and the diversions of the street. It is the reluctance of taste and imagination at our new and varnished Protestantism, with its bare walls, its cold services, and its angular churches, of which one wing, perchance, rests upon a market, and the other upon a dram-shop. Especially would I not deny the profound spiritual life, the self-sacrifice, and the beautiful charities which have consisted at all times, and which consist in the present time, with this Ritual and Sacramental form of Religion.

But when men claim that this alone is the genuine form—that these are essentials of the only true Church—then I deny that claim. If it fills some wants of our nature, it repudiates others equally authentic. If one class of minds find peace only under its consecrated shadows, others find no satisfaction but in the discipline of a spontaneous devotion, and the exercise of an individual reason. If it suffices for men like Borromeo or Newman, it does not suffice for men like George Fox or Channing; and the religion of these is as evident, in their simple spirituality, as of those in their mystic symbolism. When it sneers at the Puritan, then I must vindicate that rugged independence of soul, that faithfulness to the individual conscience, that sense of the Divine Sovereignty, which could kneel at no man's altar, and to God alone; which sacrificed all things for the right, but yielded not a hair to the wrong; which could find no medicine for the spirit in Sacraments, but only in the solitude of the inner life; and which has, under God, wrought out this noble consummation of modern times, whereby others may plant their vine of ritual under the broad heaven of toleration, and have liberty to sneer. When the Ritualist depre-

cates the ultraism and irreverence of the Anti-formalist, I must urge the tendency of his own principles to mummerly and absolutism. And, finally, when he falls back upon Tradition, I must fall back upon the Bible. The spirit of the New Testament is not that of Rituals or Sacraments; and the universal sentiments of the Old are not. The prophet Isaiah, who exclaims: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth . . . . Wash you, make you clean . . . . cease to do evil, learn to do well!" joins with the Apostle, who says that Christ "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances . . . . nailing it to his cross," and that no man should judge us in meat or drink, or times, or seasons. And, surely, there is no argument for forms or places in those Divine Words, which declare that "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

We cannot deny, then, that pure religion may consist with Rituals and Sacraments; we cannot deny that it may exist without these. But I insist upon this point: that the Sacrament, the Ritual, is not, itself, Religion. It may be a beautiful sign—it may be a quick suggestion—it may be a medium of spiritual influence; but, alone, it cannot take the place of inward, personal piety, of right affections, and an obedient will. No punctilious form can stand substitute for a vigilant conscience; no posture of devotion can supply the place of living deeds; no ascetic mortification can atone for guilt; no auricular confession can speak, instead of the breathings of repentance, in the ear of God, and out from the depths of the solitary soul. He who relies upon these forms, and finds sanctity *only in them*, may be sincere, may be serious about religion, but as yet he is only a *Seeker*; and, speaking to his heart with all-penetrating meaning, comes to him the decree: "Ye must be born again."

Again; there is a class who seek Religion in *Philosophy*.

They believe in God by a course of reasoning. They believe in immortality, because it is a conclusion riveted in their minds by the iron links of induction. They pray, or not, according as it seems logical to do so. They would be good, because goodness is useful. But every proposition upon which they act, must first be strained through the alembic of the intellect, and must stand out in the clear definition of science. They verify and build up their religion with callipers and dissecting-knife. It is a system of digestion and pneumatology. They find an organ for veneration, and another for conscientiousness, and therefore conclude that religion has a legitimate place in the harmony of human character. But all must be calm and balanced. They dare not trust the feelings, and give but little scope to enthusiasm. Sometimes, indeed, they rise to eloquence in expatiating upon the truths of natural theology, and of "the elder scripture;" though they believe in Christ also, because he seems well authenticated as an historical Fact. In short, such men are religious like Cicero, or Seneca, with some modification from modern science, and from the Sermon on the Mount.

Now there is a close alliance between true Philosophy and true Religion. That the New Testament is eminently free from fanaticism, and makes no appeal to mere credulity, any one will see who examines. That it is rational and sober, constitutes one of its great internal evidences. A Christian Philosopher is no anomaly, but a beautiful expression of the essential harmony of all truth. Knowledge and Piety burn and brighten with an undivided flame. Revelation and Science are continually interpreting one another, while every day the material universe is unfolding a more spiritual significance, and indicating its subservience to a spiritual end. But, after all, in order to be religious, it is not necessary that a man should be a philosopher, and it is certain that often he is a philosopher without being religious. Religion

and Philosophy may coalesce, but they are two different spheres. Philosophy is out-looking and speculative; Religion is inner and vital. In the scheme of Philosophy; Religion is reasoned out as a consequence, and adopted as an appendage to character. In the true scheme, it is the central germ of our being, the controlling force of life. The religion of Philosophy consists of right *views* of things, and a prudential schooling of the passions. True Religion consists in a right state of the affections, and a renunciation of self. In the one case, Religion may "play round the head, but come not near the heart;" in the other, it breaks up the great deep of conscience, and pours an intense light upon the springs of motive. Philosophy contains the idea of intellectual rectitude; Religion, of moral obedience. Philosophy speaks of virtue; Religion, of holiness. Philosophy rests upon development; Religion requires regeneration. In short, we make an every-day distinction between the two, which is far more significant than any verbal contrast. It is the one, rather than the other, that we apply, in the profounder experiences of our moral nature, in the consciousness of sin, and in the overwhelming calamities of life. The one pours a purifying, healing, up-lifting power into the homes of human suffering, and into the hearts of the ignorant and the poor, that the other has not to bestow. Philosophy is well, under all circumstances; but it is not the most inner element of our humanity. Religion, in its humility, penitence, and faith—at the foot of the cross, and by the open sepulchre—rejoices in a direct and practical vision, to which Philosophy, with its encyclopædia and telescope, cannot attain.

Under this head, too, may be ranked a class of men who, though they may not be exactly philosophers, fall into the same conception of Religion, as a matter of the intellect—as the possession of correct views—rather than a profound moral life. They estimate men according to what they be-

lieve, and attribute the same sanctity to the Creed that others attribute to the Ritual. And as Religion, in their conception of it, consists in a series of correct opinions, the great work should be an endeavor to make men think right. So the pulpit should be an arsenal of controversial forces, incessantly playing upon the ramparts of dogmatic error, with the artillery of dogmatic truth, and for ever hammering the same doctrinal monotony upon the anvils of logic and of textual interpretation. They are satisfied if some favorite tenet is proved to a demonstration, and go forth rejoicing in the superiority of their "views," without asking if Saving Love has melted and transfigured their own hearts, or whether personal sin may not canker in their souls, if hereditary guilt is not there. Now, it is true that great principles lie at the foundation of all practical life, and the more elevated and clear our views, the more effectual are the motives to holiness and love. But it matters little to what pole of doctrine the intellect swings, if the heart hangs unpenetrated and untouched. It matters little to what opinions in Theology the pulpit has made converts, if all its mighty truths have not heaved the moral nature of the hearer—if it has not shot into the individual soul, like an arrow, the keen conviction: "I must be born again!"

Once more: there are those who seek Religion in a routine of outward and commendable deeds—in mere *morality*. With such, the great sum of life is to be sober, chaste, humane; laying particular stress upon the business-virtues, honesty, industry, and prudence. In their idea, that man is a religious man who is an upright dealer, an orderly citizen, a good neighbor, and a charitable giver. To be religious, means to do good, to keep your promises, and mind your own business. They tell us that benevolence is the richest offering, and that the truest worship is in the workshop and the field—that a man prays when he drives a nail or ploughs a furrow, and that he expresses the best thanksgiving when



he enjoys what he has got, and is content if he gets no more.

Now, the world is not so bad that there is not a good deal of this kind of religion in it. It would be unjust to deny that many golden threads of integrity wind through the fabric of labor; that there is a strong nerve of rectitude holding together the transactions of daily life, and a wealth of spontaneous kindness enriching its darker and more terrible scenes.

But, after all, these easy sympathies, and these prudential virtues, lack the *radicalness* of true Religion. Religion cannot exist without morality; but there is a formal morality which exists without religion. I say, a *formal* morality; for essential morality and essential Religion are as inseparable as the sap and the fruit. Nor is morality a mere segment of religion. It is one-half of it. Nay, when we get at absolute definitions, the two terms may be used interchangeably; for then we consider religion presenting its earthly and social phase, and we consider morality with its axis turned heavenward. But, in the case of these outside virtues, which are so common, we behold only one-half of religion, and that is its earthly and social form; and even this lacks the root and sanction of true morality. For the difference between the morality of a religious man and that of another, consists in this: with the one, morality bears the sanctions of an absolute law, and God is at its centre. It is wrought out by discipline, and maintained at all cost. With the other, it is an affair of temperament, and education, and social position. He has received it as a custom, and adopted it as a policy; or he acts upon it as an impulse. With the one, it is a matter of profit and loss, or a fitful whim of sentiment. With the other, it is the voice of a divine oracle within; that must be obeyed; it is the consecrated method of duty, and the inspiration of prayer. Now, to say that it makes no difference about the motive of an

act, so long as the act itself is good, indicates that very lack of right feeling, and right perception, which confounds the formal morality of the world with religion. For, in the distinctions of the Christian System, the *motive* makes the deed good or bad; makes the two mites richer than all the rest of the money in the treasury; makes the man who *hates* his brother a murderer. The good action may bless others, but if I do not perform it from a right motive, it does not bless me; and the essential peculiarity of religion is, that it regards inward development, individual purity, personal holiness—so that one essential excellence of the good deed consists in its effect upon the agent—consists in the sinews which it lends to his moral power, and the quantity it adds to his spiritual life. When, from a right motive, with effort and sacrifice, I help a weak and poor man, I enrich my individual and spiritual being. If I bestow from a mere gush of feeling, I receive no permanent spiritual benefit; if from a bad motive, I impoverish my own heart. Acts, then, which appear the same thing in form, differ widely, considered in their *religious* bearings. There is the morality of impulse, the morality of selfishness, and the morality of principle, or religious morality. The motive of the first-named, we obey instantaneously, and it may do good, just as we draw our hands from the flame, and thereby obey a law of our physical nature, though we act without any consideration of that law. A great deal of the morality in the world is of this kind. It may do good, but has no reference to the law of rectitude. It is impulsive, and, therefore, does not indicate a steadfast virtue, or a deep religious life. For the very impulsiveness that leads to the gratification of the sympathies, leads to the gratification of the appetites, and thus we often find generous and benevolent characteristics mixed with vicious conduct. Then, as I have said, there is the morality of selfishness. In this instance, I may perform many good actions from sheer calculation of material profit.

I may be benevolent, because it will increase my reputation for philanthropy. I may be honest, because "honesty is the best policy." But is this the highest, the religious sanction of morality? No: the morality of the religious man is the morality of *principle*. The motive in his case is not "I will," or "I had better," but "I ought." He recognises morality as a law, impersonal, over-mastering the dictates of mere self, and holding all impulses in subservience to the highest good. The morality of impulse is uncertain. The morality of policy is mean and selfish. The morality of religion is loyal, disinterested, self-sacrificing. It acts from faith in God, and with reference to God.

But another trait separates the religious from the merely formal moralist. It consists in the fact that with him, "*morality*," as we commonly employ the term, is not all. Piety has its place. His affections not only flow earthward, but turn heavenward. He not only loves his neighbor as himself, but he loves the Lord his God. He not only visits the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, but he keeps himself unspotted from the world. With him, toil is prayer, and contentment is thanksgiving, but because he infuses into them a spirit of devotion, which he has cultivated by more solitary and special acts. With him it is a good thing to live honestly, industriously, soberly; but all life is not outward, is not in traffic and labor, and meat and drink. There is an inward world, to which his eyes are often introverted—a world of spiritual experience, of great realities, and everlasting sanctions—a world behind the veil—a holy of holies in his soul, where rests the Shecinah of God's more immediate presence; yea, where he meets God face to face. And it is this that directs his public conduct. The orderly and beautiful method of his life is not the huddled chance-work of good impulses, is not the arithmetic of selfishness; but it is a serene and steady plan of being projected from the communion of the oratory, and the meditation of the closet.

Again, I say, let us not depreciate morality. Let us condemn that ostentatious piety which lifts up holy hands to God, but never stretches them out to help man—which anoints its head with the oil of sanctity, but will not defile its robes with the blood of the abused, or the contact of the guilty—which is loud in profession and poor in performance—which makes long prayers, but devours widows' houses. Let us condemn this, but remember that this is not real religion, only its form; as often, the kind deed, the honest method, is not true morality, only its form. Of both these departments of action, let it be said: that these we have done, and not left the other undone. Let us recognise the perfect harmony, nay, the identity of religion and morality, in that One who came from the solitary conflict of the desert, to go about doing good, and who descended, from the night-prayer on the mountain, to walk and calm the troubled waves of the sea.

But those who rest in a mere routine of kind and prudential deeds, need the deeper life and the inner perception which detects the meaning and gives the sanction to those deeds. Such need the vital germ of morality—the changed heart, the new birth.

And as I have spoken of a subordinate yet somewhat distinct class who may be ranked under the general head of seekers after religion in philosophy, let me here briefly allude to some with whom religion is a matter of mere sentiment and good feeling. Such are easily moved by the great doctrines of the New Testament. They are affected by the sermon; they have gushes of devout emotion during the prayer. But with them, religion is not a deep and steady pulse of divine life. Prayer is not a protracted aspiration—is not a habit. They feel well towards God, because they consider him a good-natured, complacent Being; but they do not meditate upon the majesty of His Nature, upon His Justice, and His Holiness. From the doctrine of immor-

talitý they draw consolation, but not sanctity. They regard it as a good time coming, but it furnishes them with no personal and stringent applications for the present. They need a more solemn and penetrating vision; a profounder experience in the soul. They need to be born again.

Then, again, there are those who may be called *amateurs* in religion. That is, they are curious about religious things. They like to speculate about it, to argue upon its doctrines, and to broach or examine new theories. They go about from sect to sect, and from church to church, tasting what is novel in the reasoning, or pleasing in the manner of the preacher; in one place to-day to hear an orator; in another to-morrow to hear a latter-day saint; it is all the same thing to them. All they want with religion is entertainment and excitement. They are Athenians, ever seeking some new thing. They smack at a fresh heresy as if they were opening a box of figs, and are as delighted with a controversy, as a boy with a sham-fight. They have no fixed place in the Church universal. They are liberalists, without any serious convictions, and cosmopolites without any home affections. In fact, to them religion is a sham-fight—a matter of spectacle and zest—not a personal interest, or an inward life. They would seek Jesus by night, because they hope to learn something wonderful or new, and would be startled to hear his solemn words tingling in their hearts: "Ye must be born again!"

Nay, my friends, would not these solemn words startle many of us? It may be, we have never made any inquiry concerning religion—have never even come to Jesus, as it were, by night. Such, with their barks of being drifting down the stream of time, have never asked the meaning of their voyage, or reckoned their course; nay, perhaps they live as though religion were a fable, as though earth were our permanent abiding-place, and heaven a dream. If such there are, they have not even listened to the Saviour's words. But there are others among us, perhaps, who are interested

in the subject of religion, who are in some way or another engaged in it; but who are restless seekers after it, rather than actual possessors of it; who are resting upon insufficient substitutes for it. And I ask, would not these words, breaking forth from the lips of Jesus, startle us in our ritualism, our philosophy, our outside morality, our sentimentalism, or our mere curiosity? And do they not speak to *us*? Are they not as true now as when they struck upon the shivering ear of Nicodemus? Do they not make us feel as intensely our obligation and our religious want, as he might have felt there, with the wind flitting by him as though the Holy Spirit were touching him with its appeal, and with the calm gaze of the Saviour looking into his heart? Do they not demand of us, resting here awhile from the cares and labors of the world, something more than mere conformity, or intellectual belief, or formal deeds? Do they not demand a new and better spirit, a *personal apprehension* of the religious life, a breaking up and regeneration of our moral nature, a change of heart?

## XLVIII.

### UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S THOUGHTS.

POTTER.

[ALONZO POTTER, D. D., LL. D., was a great and godly divine, whose life was full of sanctified labors for the good of humanity. An eminent educator for more than twenty years, he did much to reform the systems of collegiate and common-school instruction. A Christian philanthropist, he inaugurated numerous "Young Men's Associations," to give literary and moral entertainment to those otherwise beguiled into dissolute conduct. A diocesan of rare executive abilities and catholicity of heart, his imperishable works attest his zeal for his Master. He was born the son of a Quaker farmer, in the town of Beekman, (now La Grange), Dutchess county, New York, July 6th 1800. Before his nineteenth year, he graduated with the highest honors from Union College, having as classmates Francis Wayland and William H. Seward. In 1826 he became rector of St. Paul's Church, Boston. For health's sake after five years' exhausting labors, he accepted the vice-presidency of Union College, with the professorship of intellectual and moral philosophy, and political economy. His culture was broad and profound, so systematized and digested as to be always available. After declining several calls to the episcopate, Dr. Potter was consecrated (P. E.) Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, September 23d 1845. He died, universally lamented, at San Francisco, July 4th 1865. Among his works are, a series of sixty "Lowell Lectures," on Natural Theology and Christian Evidences; "Charges and Discourses," "Hand-Book for Readers and Students;" and the edited "Memorial Papers," one of whose principles was "to aid more effectually in restoring outward unity and the spirit of true brotherhood among those who name the name of Christ." Rev. Dr. Howe has written appreciative "Memoirs." This Sermon, now first printed, appears by the kindness of his son Dr. Henry C. Potter, of Grace Church, New York.]

*"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."*—Isaiah lv. 8.

NOR can they be. Thoughts that are revolved by an Infinite and Eternal Mind cannot be grasped by one that is

finite. The child does not comprehend the thoughts expressed, nor the actions performed, even by his parent. The peasant cannot understand the discoveries of the philosopher, nor the subject fathom the designs, even though announced, of his prince. And can man then, the creature of to-day, whose view is confined to the present place and the present moment; who can arrive at most truth only through a laborious process of induction; whose mind is not only circumscribed to a narrow sphere, but frail and fallible when operating there—can he think to track those counsels which are from everlasting to everlasting; which extend from one to another end of God's universe; which are connected with an infinitude of different and distant objects; and which are to be fully developed only by the revolution of eternal ages? Oh! when standing before such a Being; when looking forth on that dark immense where his thoughts expatiate; when gazing on those judgments of His which are unsearchable, those ways which are past finding out; when seeing how little distance our bedimmed and feeble eye has penetrated, or can penetrate; oh! then the words of the text rise spontaneously to our lips: "Thy thoughts, O God, *are* not our thoughts, neither are our ways thy ways."

Wherever we look, in every stage of our being, this, if we are wise, will be our language.

Are we directing our view, for example, to the BOOK OF NATURE? Here, indeed, is much that is legible, much that proclaims the wisdom and might of its Author. His eternal power and Godhead shine resplendent in those Heavens above. His never-failing beneficence is reflected from every beauty and bounty of earth. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. Not a page or line, but it contains some new disclosure of Divine glory; yet not a page or line, but it bespeaks, at the same time, the immensity of God and the ignorance of man. The more we learn even of nature, the less we seem to know.



So many difficulties occur at every step; so many things to disappoint our preconceptions, and give us presage of still greater disappointment yet to come; so many truths which elude our view by their subtilty, or defy our comprehension by their vastness; so many facts seen to exist, and yet irreconcilable by us with other facts equally certain: so much there is of this as to demonstrate that if a man thinketh he knoweth anything perfectly, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

With every event there are connected questions which no science has solved, and which all admit no human science can solve. If as we advance one mystery disappears, it is only to give place to another. We catch now a new glimpse of our Creator to awaken our reverence, and now a new view of our ignorance to confound our pride. Alps rise o'er Alps. As we mount upward our view may enlarge, but it is only to disclose points of prospect that communicate with regions yet more distant and invisible. And no matter *how lofty* be our ascent, to humble our self-confidence, to stimulate our thirst for knowledge and deepen our faith and trust, God still shrouds Himself in clouds and darkness; still calls us to bow down in wonder and adoration, and to acknowledge that His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways.

And so again if we turn to the BOOK OF PROVIDENCE. Here, also, is abundant testimony to the glory of God. When we observe the connection usually subsisting between virtue and happiness on the one hand, and vice and misery on the other, we feel assured that the Judge of all the Earth is righteous! When we look again at rains and fruitful seasons replenishing the stores, and making glad the hearts of men; when we consider with what wonderful skill God has adapted the objects around us to the promotion of our happiness, and the improvement of our souls: all this proclaims that He is good as well as righteous, and wise as well as good. But then we have no sooner perused

these animating and momentous lessons ; we have no sooner begun to think that we know something of the counsels of our Creator, and to be inflated with pride at the thought, than a scene opens to level that pride to the dust. We take a wider view, and behold ! moral evil presents itself. Yes, on this earth placed under the sway of One—Himself too holy to look upon sin and sinners with the least forbearance—subject entirely to His control—peopled by beings whom He loves as the apple of His eye—on (this earth does *sin* enter. It comes ! and with it comè discord, oppression, disease, and death. Here they now reign and riot in all their horror : multitudes unnumbered, capable of the highest virtue and felicity, are here, beneath the immediate eye of God, pining under sickness, or scourged by tyranny, or abandoned to sin and sinking to everlasting woe ; when had He—as we sometimes presumptuously think—had He interposed, they would have remained for ever innocent and happy. And yet He interposed not. Though His own glory seemed to demand it, though mercy seemed to plead in terms of unutterable energy ; though He could forfeit, as we sometimes presume to think, no conceivable good, while He would have averted all possible evil, still He interposed not, and man is now left a prey to suffering and sin and death ! And yet who doubts that the Almighty is good, and that His tender mercies are over all his work ? For this and a thousand similar facts, there is but one solution. It is this : “ His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways his ways.” As high as Heaven is above the earth, so high are His ways above our ways, and His thoughts above our thoughts.

Be this, then, our consolation in the day of trial ; be this our resource when all is dark before us ; when God seems to clothe Himself in anger ; when He visits us with the most desolating trials, and all things seem to be against us ; when, for example, He plucks away some treasure which leaves us poor indeed, while its removal can subserve (as our murmur-

ing hearts would whisper) no useful purpose; when death comes forth from his hiding-place, and selecting from among our friends some shining mark, some being distinguished alike for usefulness and loveliness and worth, snatches him from the circle which he blesses and adorns; or when public disaster broods over or falls upon us; when war, or pestilence, or anarchy collect, like a black cloud, on our horizon, and seem to impend universal ruin and desolation; or finally, when that dark cloud pours its gathered wrath upon our heads, and there seems to remain before the eye of unaided man no way of escape:—Oh! at that hour how does faith hang out a bow of hope, in these words of the Most High: “My thoughts are not your thoughts.” “To you all seems disastrous. But you know not My counsels, neither understand ye My thoughts. Fear not, then, though clouds and darkness are round about My throne, for justice and judgment are its seat and habitation. Fear not though my displeasure seems to burn with fierceness; for to the contrite and humble My compassions cannot fail.” Man is ignorant and fallible. God alone is all-wise and all-gracious. He can bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion; and He will do it. “YEA, THE LORD REIGNETH! let the Earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.”

But finally, let us turn to the BOOK OF REVELATION. Here we see yet plainer indications of Divine goodness and grandeur. Truths which Nature and Providence have left unnoticed, or but obscurely intimated, are here explicitly declared. But because the Bible reveals these truths, it by no means follows that there is nothing which it does not reveal. It does not follow that there are no vestiges of darkness and mystery to be found even on its sacred pages. When in the systems of nature and Providence every truth, either in itself or in its relations, is encumbered with difficulty, can it be supposed that in the system of Revelation this is the case with no truth? Where then would be the

*analogy* between these several systems? The same God is the author of them all. This God we know must act—uniformly—like Himself. But if, while in the one case He has found it necessary in itself, or profitable for us, to surround every truth with darkness and mystery, He has in another case dispensed with all darkness and all mystery, under *such circumstances* where would this uniformity be found? And we may ask farther, How is this possible? How can that which forms part of the counsels of an Infinite and Eternal mind be comprehended thoroughly in all its relations by one who is merely finite?

Ah, beloved! in the Bible not less than elsewhere there must be much to remind us of our ignorance and imbecility. Many a cloud, it is true, is dispersed. Life and immortality are brought to light! A way in which God can be just and yet justify the sinner, is revealed. Inexpressible lustre is thrown over the holiness and clemency and wisdom of God. But then, as in the works of Nature and Providence, so here—one difficulty disappears only to be replaced by another. If life and immortality appear, there appears with them that inexplicable fact—the resurrection of the body: the fact that these bodies of ours, though they die and dissolve, and through their constituent particles unite with other bodies, and become even the property of other men; yet, still they shall be at the last day resumed by us and be resumed in all their substantial identity. So, if a way of redemption be opened, it is opened through that mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh—God in all His infinite perfection united with frail mortal, helpless man. And if both the Divine holiness and love are glorified in this plan of redemption, they are glorified by appointing the innocent to suffer for the guilty, the just for the unjust. These facts rest on the same foundation. They are attested by the same proof; and whoso admits the one cannot philosophically reject the other. That philosophers had not foreseen this

resurrection or incarnation, is no objection to their reality; for neither had they foreseen the discoveries of modern science. That their preconceptions are even contradicted by these revelations of God, is no objection; for so are they contradicted every day by the revelations of human art and research. Nay, that they involve incomprehensible mysteries is no objection; for where is there object that does not. Thine hairs are all numbered. Each one grows, and matures, and falls under the supervision and the command of God. But canst thou tell *how*? Canst thou tell what that aliment is which nourishes and sustains them? Canst thou tell how it ministers to their increase and support? Canst thou tell what determines one to be white and another black? Canst thou explain why they become like snow in the winter of life; and why one single night of grief and anguish is sufficient to silver them over? And dost *thou* complain that these disclosures of the Bible are mysterious? *They are mysterious.* It is mysterious that the innocent Son of God should be allowed to suffer for sinful men. And is it not mysterious that the innocent child should suffer for the sins of its guilty and profligate parent? It is mysterious that the Divine Spirit should unite itself with a child of earth! And is it not mysterious that thine own ethereal spirit should join and animate and move those clods thou callest thy body? It is mysterious that from the dust and ruins of the sepulchre should arise a body clothed in beauty. So is it mysterious that from that seed putrefying and dissolving in the earth, should spring up a plant arrayed in more glory than ever was a Solomon, bearing fruit meet for the banquet of kings. Go and solve the wonders of any—the humblest—spire that vegetates in yonder field. Go scatter the darkness that enshrouds the minutest pebble that rolls beneath thy feet. And when thou hast done that, then mayest thou come and murmur that Redemption has its wonders, that eternity has its secrets!

O man, remember thy imbecility! God gives thee a little

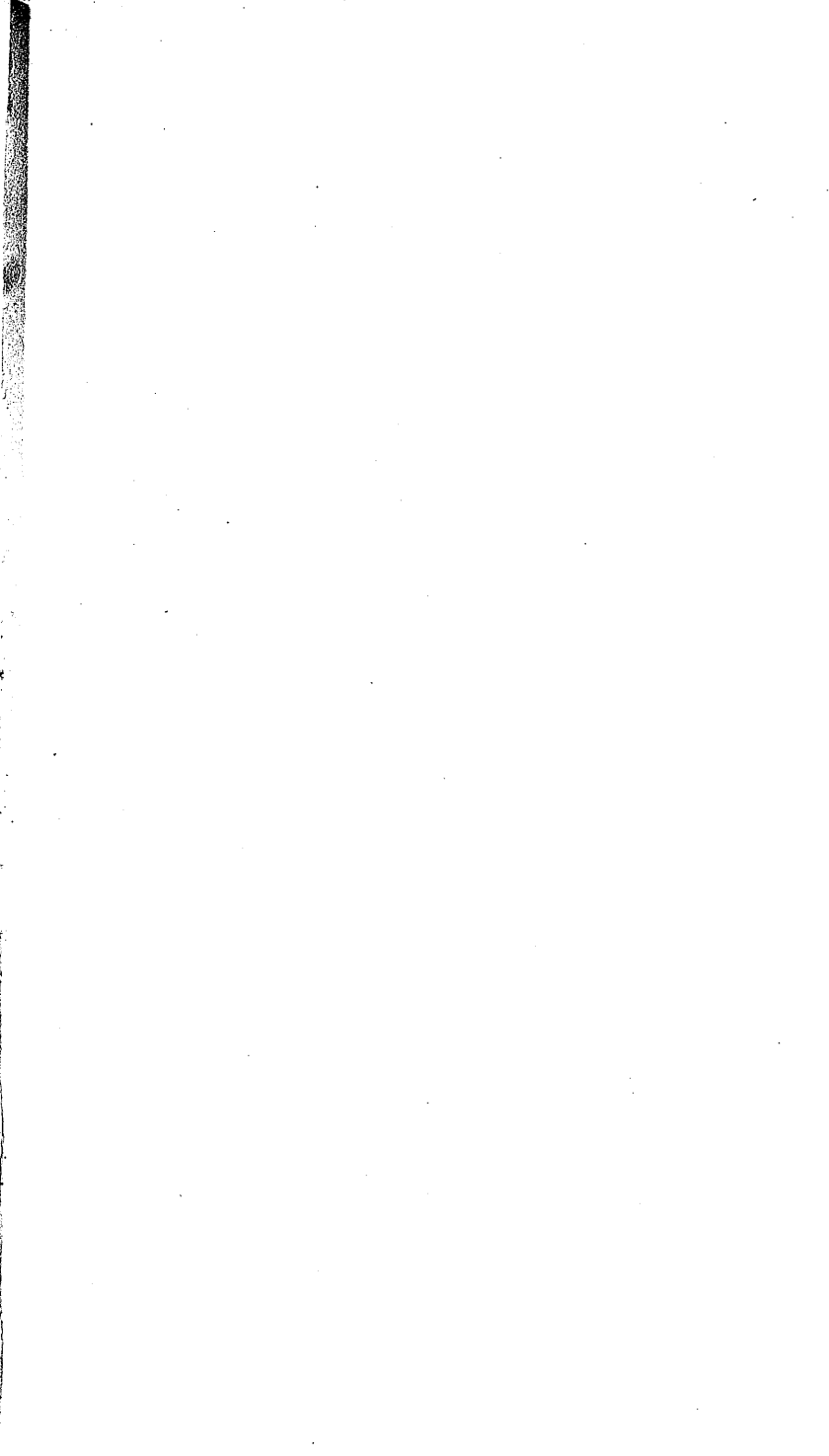
light, that thou mayest know thy duty. But he surrounds thee with much darkness, that thou mayest know thy dependence. He rewards thine efforts after knowledge with some discoveries, to encourage thee to persevere. He meets them with more difficulties, to humble thy vain-glory. He allows thee to ascend higher and higher on the Mount of prospect; but he causes the horizon to recede farther and farther from thy view. He reminds thee perpetually that thy career is to be unending; that thy improvement is to be eternal; that thou art to be ever learning, and yet never coming to the knowledge of all truth; that as thou must always remain finite, so for ever and ever it will be true that thy thoughts are not God's thoughts, nor his ways thy ways.

Here, then, is a great truth. The human mind is finite. To its range a limit has been fixed by God—a boundary, ever widening in one sense, but of which He hath still said, “Thus far shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” To confine itself within this limit, is its highest wisdom. To attempt to pass it, is alike folly and guilt: folly, because the attempt must ever end in disappointment; guilt, because it is positive rebellion against the decrees of the Most High! That he pointed out this limit for the first time distinctly to men; that he defined the true end of all knowledge, and the means of its attainment, was the great merit of the Father of the New Philosophy; and that his instructions have been followed by his successors, is the true secret of those triumphs which have been won by modern science.

Facts—they tell us—are the only proper subject of inquiry, and experience or testimony the only proper source of information. Do we devote ourselves to the study of Nature? Then we are to inquire, not how it might have been constituted, not how it ought to be constituted; but *How it is* constituted. Dismissing all preconceptions and theories, and sitting down in the capacity of docile and candid observers, we are to ask merely, What are the facts; and

these ascertained by competent testimony, we are to admit them: admit them even though we cannot reconcile them with each other; admit them even though we cannot discover the hidden springs and energies by which they are produced. So when we turn to Providence or Revelation. Do we see the apparent disorders and inconsistencies which prevail in the *moral* world? We are not hastily to question the wisdom, or doubt the presence of the Sovereign; but waiting till revolving years or ages shall have developed the result, we are then to see whether these seeming disorders are not all parts of an harmonious plan, and proofs at once of the Providence and the rectitude of God. Do we consider the plan of Redemption revealed in the Scriptures? We are not to inquire whether God might not have devised another. We are not to ask too curiously how its parts correspond with our preconceptions, or even with each other. We are simply to ask, What saith the Lord?

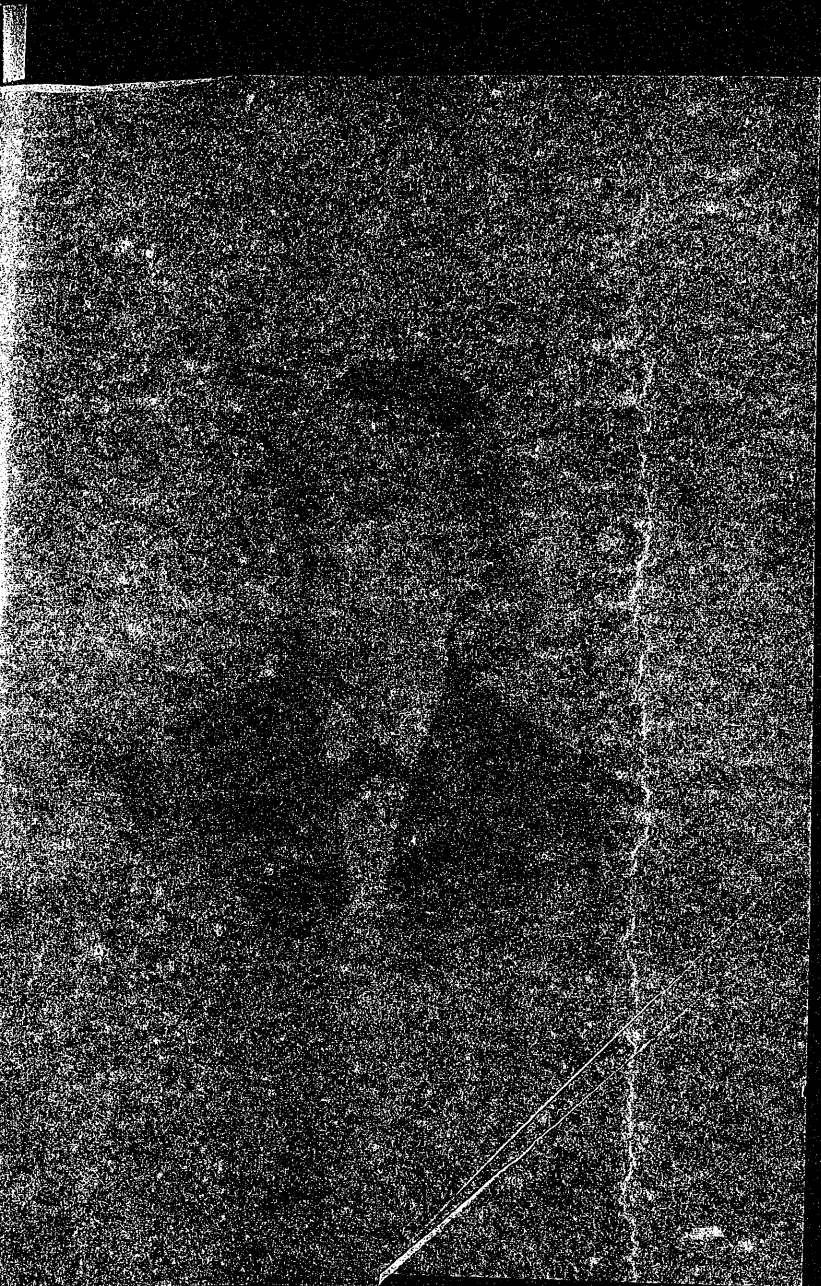
In the New Testament, God Himself professes to explain the way of salvation which He hath opened for sinners. Our only business, then, is to peruse that explanation. Does it disappoint our expectations? Does it suggest difficulties which we cannot solve? We are to remember that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. We are to remember that means appearing to us the most inappropriate may be, in truth, those means which of all others are the most wisely selected; that the appointments of the Most High being parts of an infinite system, must for ever baffle the perfect comprehension of finite minds; that as yet we are but in the dawn, the twilight, of our being; that as our day advances, the darkness which now shrouds many an object will clear away; and that at every step we shall have occasion to exclaim: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints!







*Henry Ward Beecher*





## XLIX.

### THE PROBLEM OF JOY AND SUFFERING IN LIFE.

BEECHER.

[First in popularity among American preachers, reformers, and lecturers, is HENRY WARD BEECHER, son of the famous Dr. Lyman Beecher, and brother to three evangelical ministers. He was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, January 24th 1813. At the age of twenty-one he graduated from Amherst College, and studied theology under his father in Lane Seminary, Cincinnati. After a two years' charge in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and a pastorate of eight years in Indianapolis, he was called in 1847 to Plymouth Church, Brooklyn—a body of Orthodox Congregationalists. His "Lectures to Young Men," "The Star Papers," "Norwood," a novel, and various series of Sermons, are familiar to most readers. For several years he has had in preparation a "Life of Jesus the Christ." Besides preaching regularly to the largest congregation in this country, Mr. Beecher edits "The Christian Union," a leading religious weekly. As a man, he is high-toned, pure-hearted, joyous, mirthful, and the embodiment of manliness; as a thinker, he is fresh, picturesque, creative, life-giving, and zestful; a lover of all the beauties of nature and art, which supply him with inexhaustible types of spiritual truths; as a preacher, he is keenly sympathetic to all that concerns humanity, thoroughly wide-awake to the needs of the Nineteenth century, and in earnest—morally and spiritually, profoundly in earnest, although he may tip one of his keenest shafts with a smile. Physically, he has a grand vitality, a necessity for his incessant activities. The following Sermon is reprinted by permission from the second volume of "Plymouth Pulpit."]

*"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."*—Prov. iii. 3.

*"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."*—John xvi. 33.

THE Old Testament is a bright and sunny book, and represents virtue and obedience as bringing forth the most pleasant fruits; and one, in reading it, would be apt to get the idea that a moral and God-fearing man must be su-

premely happy. The promises abound, to the one side, of obedience; and the threats abound, to the other side, of disobedience. But if one turn to the New Testament, another style of teaching seems to prevail. There is a ministration of sorrow; and it is declared that if a man will live righteously, he shall suffer tribulation. "He shall be happy," says the Old Testament; "He shall be unhappy," says the New Testament. "All his ways shall be ways of peace," says the Old Testament. "He shall take my cross," says the New Testament. "Obedience, virtue, prudence, piety, are a crown of riches," says the Old Testament; "A crown of thorns they are," says the New Testament.

What shall we do between these two differing representations? This seeming conflict of statement runs through the Bible. There are in the New Testament intimations of the same doctrine that breaks out in such power in the Old. There are echoes in the New Testament of those very promises of earthly joy in obedience which so superabound in the Old Testament. Religion is joyful; and yet, crucifixion is its symbol. The way of piety is called *peace*; and yet, we are commanded to put on the whole armor, and be ready, as warriors, to fight at any hour. Are these the symbols of peace? We are to rejoice; and yet we are to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Christ. We are to inherit the world; and yet we are to forsake the world, and not be conformed to it. The Old Testament seems to exclude suffering from its ideal saint; and yet the New Testament sets forth the divine man as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

One class of minds goes to these diverse representations, and by elective affinity takes the joyous side, and simply does not meddle with the other. There are men who go through the Bible taking out its promises, its joyous, hopeful, cheering, comforting passages, and elect these things to

themselves. They do not see that there is any controversy or conflict, simply because they do not consider the other side at all. They let it alone. As the disciples, when they walked through the fields eating corn, *rubbed the ears in their hands*, to get rid of the chaff; so there are a great many people who take the Scripture and rub it in their hands, and cut out the part that they like, and throw the rest away. Therefore there are many persons who talk about religion as being a life of supreme and continuing joy, and for ever appeal to persons to become Christians because it is so joyful. Well, it is joyful—in spots.

These persons are fairly matched by the ascetic spirits, who see the suffering element in the New Testament and in the Old, and make it the very prime experience of life. They believe in joy; but it is that which is to be found hereafter. The true ascetic throws forward his joy, and he has it only by expectation. Here he has to wear the girdle and the sackcloth. Here he has to play the martyr, in order that he may play the saint and the conqueror hereafter.

But the greater number of men vibrate in perplexity between these two representations. They have a notion that true religion confers supreme happiness; but they are far from being fully happy. They are far from being very happy. And when they look round about them in the church, they see there all gradations, from sleepy good nature and indolent content, at the top of the scale, along down to the utmost disquiet and aspiration made unhappy. But then, they account for it, without any very close reasoning or examination, on the theory that persons are not happy who are religious, because they have not enough religion. This, as a mere matter of fact, is very true; but really, it does not seem to be an adequate philosophical statement to cover the whole meaning and harmonize these two elements of joy and sorrow that the Bible abounds in.

This class are nearer the truth than either of the former extremes; but they hold it in an empirical form.

Now, cannot we get a larger view? Can not we throw light upon this problem of the mingling of joy and sorrow in this world? I propose it, not so much for the gratification of curiosity, or for the sake of exercising the philosophical ingenuity; but because it has become indispensable to discuss such themes. Every age has to make a new statement of moral facts in the light of the consciousness of that age. The old statements held good for their time. They satisfied the yearnings, they met the moral necessities of the aspiring souls of their day. But the world goes on, and new statements become indispensable. If any age gains anything it lifts the next one up to a higher plane; and you must take new observations from that higher plane, and not change the truth, but recast the statements of it, and newly form the theories which cover all the voluminous facts of moral consciousness among men. Besides, it is out of this large view of the mingling of joy and sorrow in life that we shall derive, as I trust, in the sequel, some of the most potent motives for right living, and some of the most comforting views for our weakness, infirmities, and afflictions.

If the race of men were ideally perfect, they would be perfectly happy. The ultimate divine idea in man is that he should be a creature organized to produce happiness in every one of his multiform faculties. Although happiness is not the end and aim of being, it is yet the invariable concomitant of moral perfection. Happiness may be said to be one of the signs, therefore, of ripeness in any faculty. In other words, if the mind of man is imagined as standing in the complete condition for which it was designed, it would be in harmony with universal law, with universal being, with its own self; and it would, under the divine purpose, ring out true and perfect happiness. It is an agent complex, but made to be happy.

Religion, then, regarded as a theory of a perfect state, is right in pronouncing itself a *way of pleasantness*, and a *path of peace*. If a man could but walk perfectly in the way of religion, he would be perfectly happy. The way is pleasant, and all the paths are peace; and yet, along that pleasant way there are groans and sorrows innumerable; and along that way of peace there is struggle, turmoil, combat, and confusion. But the divine plan and intent, the ultimate state, is a state of supreme blessedness. It is the *teleological* condition—if you have read modern books, and accepted their terminology. The nature of man is one which, when brought fully up to its divine ideal, will produce constant happiness.

But man is not born into an ideal state—into a perfect state, even. On the contrary, he is born further from his nature than any other creature on earth. Some creatures are born right up to their nature. They have their whole nature at birth. The fly never grows a particle. It never takes on a faculty, nor augments a faculty. It is a complete fly, it is a patriarch, the minute it is hatched. There is no expansion to it. As you go down on the scale to the lowest form of animated creation, you shall observe that, there, all the faculties a creature is to have, he has in their full, plenary power the moment he starts; but you will observe, as you go up in the scale, that there is this distinguishing peculiarity: that as animal nature rises in structure and in scope of being, the space between the birth-point and the full possession of itself is augmented and widened. And how long it takes an animal to come to its maturity, measures somewhat the place on the scale of animal creation where it stands. The lower down you go, the nearer the creation is to perfection when it starts; and the higher up you go, the further it is from perfection when it starts. And nothing is so far from it as a man. There is nothing so far from the perfection of even his physical powers as a man.



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Born as a babe, what is a man that neither sees nor hears; that distinguishes nothing; that knows nothing; that is as near to pulp as anything can be? And yet that child is a son of God, and is destined yet, through evolution and education, and sanctifying grace or inspiration, to rise and be but little lower than the angels. But oh! how long the journey from the cradle to the crown! Man is not born into his perfect state. He is born just as far from it, it would seem, as God could put him. It is not an accident, either, I take it. It is a characteristic fact, not to be lost sight of in any moral theory of facts respecting the human family in this mortal state.

Regarding man historically—that is, through the whole race, and the periods of it—he was born at the point at which the animal stops, and moral intelligence begins. To be unfolded from this seminal point, and grow up to the full spiritual manhood in Christ Jesus, is the real problem of historic times. Races of men, savage, uncivilized, animal, began at the very lowest conceivable point. There is no revelation that gives us anything to the contrary. There is no true knowledge that does not point in that direction, namely, that the race originated in conditions just a little above the animal, but with the capacity to go on immeasurably beyond them. On the whole, but slowly, with wide intermissions and many retrocessions, and with a vast waste, the race has steadily grown away from its animal conditions, and is surely reaching upward toward its ideal spiritual state. As a race, it is going to give evidence of a far higher condition than might be suspected from anything we can see by looking backward; and you should remember, when you speak of the human race, that nature does not lie backward. Nature to us lies forward, always. That is our nature to which we come when we are unfolded and developed by the education of God's spirit—not that with which

we started. For God put us as far from himself as his arm could reach, when he started us.

Each generation in this race is set back, as it were, and has to do for itself what the whole race had to do—namely, find its way up from nothing to something; and from something to the highest form of development. Every child is born an animal. It is that and nothing else, literally, at the beginning. Every child has to learn how to control itself as an animal. The lamb does not. Dropped in the morning, by night it sports over all the pasture, nimbler, if possible, than its own dam. But the child that is born waits its year before it even knows how to walk. It does not know how to find its foot or its hand except through slow feelings and rude gropings after it, through months, and months, and months. A child has to learn from the beginning everything. It knows absolutely nothing. And that which the race is doing on the great scale, each individual of it is doing in his generation.

It becomes easier, every age, to do it. That is to say, every single individual man has to learn how to use his physical organization; how to use his intellectual faculties; how to use his social capacity; how to employ his moral nature. These things are not made known to him. They are not set into him like machinery, to work themselves. They are things which belong to that great process of education which is going on in the whole world, in regard to the whole race, and in regard just as much to every individual of that race. At first it was slow and operose; but it becomes easier in every age, because each man now born has the accumulated wisdom and experience of all that went before him. Books are only another form of giving immortality to the best part of men that lived hitherto. They are the resultant of men's lives in their highest forms. All that past races knew, thought, felt, found out, invented, they passed on down, so that when men are born now they do not

have to find everything out by such tedious methods as men did in earlier times. A child born in the wilderness is born into a condition where roads are to be made, and bridges are to be constructed, and churches and school-houses and dwellings are to be built, and furniture is to be made, and everything has to be done; but a child born in a civilized community finds thousands of things ready for his use, and is spared the trouble of discovering them, so that he can go on to higher ones. In earlier periods men had to go on, part by part, finding out intellectual, moral, and social problems. As far down as the time of the patriarchs, men did not know any difference between their children and their oxen. Both were their property. It used to be the case that a man wooed his wife with his pocket. He bought her. If anything had been said about *courting* a wife, men would have looked upon it as an invasion of their prerogatives. They were so low down in the scale of development that they did not know the difference between intellectual, and moral, and physical qualities—between an organized intellectual and moral being, and a lower organization of mere material things. Therefore men bought and sold their servants; bought and sold children; bought and sold wives; bought and sold everything. It was a low and undeveloped condition of things. But we have been born into a state of the world, thank God, that is advanced far beyond that—though I can remember when men read the Bible and preached those old doctrines; as though six thousand years' experience had not taught the race anything, and the world had not learned anything. It has, however, learned a great deal; and now, when men are born into the world, there is a vast accumulation of science and art. Vast treasures in every direction meet us. And this abbreviates the work that we have to do. Each individual has to go over the same path that the race has gone over. But the race, having gone on before, has broken roads, and set up signboards, so that

every individual that follows after goes faster and surer than those who preceded him. And the world is better fitted to receive and educate its children than it was once. Children are not born into such desolate conditions as they used to be—in civilized nations, at any rate.

Then the force of great laws in hereditariness is increasing. For God has brought the most powerful motive to bear on the parental heart—namely, the law that we roll over on our children the qualities that are dominant in ourselves. Where a man lives in virtue, the presumption is that his children will take on virtue easier than if he had not. If you live for intelligence, the presumption is that your children will be educated easier than if you had not. And if a whole generation of men are brought successively through periods of education, their posterity will begin with a hereditary educating impulse which will avail them immensely. It is a law which was revealed as far back as the Old Testament, that *God will visit the sins of the parents upon the children to the third and fourth generation*. And this law is making it easier and easier, in every condition, for men to grow away from their animal conditions.

But whatever progress has been made, it is still true, just as really of the very best as of the most neglected, that men are born empty of holiness. They are at the furthest extreme and remove from perfection. There is not one single man born virtuous and good. We are born negative. Every single person born has the necessity of growing up into Christ in all things. There is no more universal proposition than this: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This is the truth which I suppose men were feeling after, and which they really, to their own inward thoughts, did embody in their phrases, when they described men as being depraved, and doubly depraved. They were feeling after fundamental facts, which are all-important in any ministra-



tion. I should prefer to dismiss that term "depraved," as not according to our later views, and as not best expressing the facts as they exist. I reject it because it is on one side covered with prejudices, and on the other side with misconceptions; yet that which was meant by the term is unquestionably a truth of fundamental importance. It is true that by nature all men are without God. All men are in this sense alienate from God. It is thus also, and in the same way, that men are without knowledge; alienate from skill; ignorant of wealth, of self-government, of everything. They do not know how to think, nor to discriminate, nor how to love, nor how to have moral inspiration. When men are born, in the earlier stages of their lives all the preparations are with them for these experiences; but not only are they born without holiness, but this is only a partial statement: they are born without knowledge, without refinement, without skill, without anything but a pack, packed up tight, which they are to unpack and learn how to use. For a man is a great bundle of tools. He is born into this life without the knowledge of how to use them; but he may learn how to use them, and how to use himself according to the laws of his nature, according to the world in which he lives, and according to the society to which he belongs.

The problem of human life is, how to unfold what God has put into you; how to make it more and more; how to co-ordinate it, so that the faculties shall rank themselves together, and march in organizations; so that it may go away from the animal toward the spiritual, and live more by the power of the spiritual world than by the power of the senses in the material world. This is man's business here on earth. And when you say that a man is born depraved, if you mean that he has no holiness, I believe so, too. He is without God. But then, he is without any knowledge of his own father and mother. He does not know his brothers and sisters. He is ignorant of his neighbors. He has no

consciousness of his own nation. Spread before the child the country's flag, the sight of which thrills us with such patriotic emotions, and what does he see in it but a play-thing? It has no associations to him. He has no knowledge concerning it. Everything is to be learned. This is the organic decree. God did not make men perfect. He made them pilgrims after perfection.

As I have said, men are born with all the faculties of reason; but not with knowledge. That they are to find. Men are born with social natures; but not with social loves and refinements of experience. These they are to work out. Men are born with moral sense; but not with knowledge of its fruits, its inspirations, its various experiences. It is the business of their life to find out these things.

To teach all this vast lore of experience, God has established what I may call five schools. The first school into which a man is born is the school of the family, where parental love is the schoolmaster. But he is just as much born into a school of the material world. And it is a part of the teaching of the family to induct the child into a knowledge of his physical organization, and into a knowledge of physical actions, so that he shall learn what is good and bad; what is sharp and blunt; what is high and low; what is water and fire. It is a part of our early experience to learn how to live according to the law of the material globe.

Then comes the school of civil society—or, organized social life on a large scale. Men have to learn that. And in learning that, they learn what are civil laws; what are the rights of their fellow-men; and what are the modes of getting along with men. In learning it, they are still further to develop the faculties, and still further to bring them into subjection to the laws of organization.

Then comes the school of business, or creative industry, which some men seem to think is a necessary evil, which a

man has to run into in order to get a mouthful of bread, and then run out of in order to be pious! But the great kingdom of work is a part of God's church on earth. It is there that God teaches us moral ideas. We learn a part of our lesson in the family; a part of it in the material world, dealing with matter; a part of it in civil society, dealing with the laws and the interests of men; and a part of it from the creative force exerted upon matter, which is industry. But all this is not something exceptional, and a necessary evil in this life. It is a department of that one great school in which men are to find themselves.

Then comes the school of the church, which is the last, and in which men learn moral and spiritual truths. Some of these things men have learned, if they have been brought up rightly, before the church reaches them; but here is the culminating influence in God's grace working through the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and sent home by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This is the highest department of the great university of life. Beginning in the family, and going through the physical world, through the civil world, and through the industrial world, up into the moral or spiritual world—this is the unity of that preparation which God has made by which men, born at nothing, shall learn how to take out the store and treasure of their faculties, and educate them, develop them, co-ordinate them, control them, carry them up from step to step, until they are made perfect men in Christ Jesus.

These are simple facts that I have been stating—not theories. Men are born just as I have said they were. They are educated just as I have said they were. I believe they are facts that are not accidental, but that indicate the divine mind. At any rate, it is the best light I can get at present, in my age. Looking at the difficulties which men have to contend with; looking at the evils which beset them on every side, I see no other theory on which you can explain

these unquestionable facts in respect to the way in which men come into this world, and in respect to the way in which the world takes care of them, develops them, and prepares them.

It is in the light of such a development that we see the relation between sorrow and joy in the Christian scheme. Joy is an attribute of man's nature drawn out and perfected. It abides with him. Its perfect form will be the fruit of his highest state. He is living toward joy, if he is living toward development. If he is rising higher and higher, he is becoming what God meant every nature should become—a perfect enginery for the production of manifold joys in sublime harmonies. This is that which we are all seeking. This is that which the race will ultimately reach.

But sorrow, on the other hand, is that conflict which every person experiences as he is endeavoring to learn. Sorrow is the non-observance of laws, whether it be through ignorance or momentary wilfulness. Sorrow is the conflict of men on the way to themselves. It is the conflict of men with their lower nature, when they are attempting to take possession of it and control it by their higher faculties. It is the participation of each individual with something of the sadness which belongs to the whole economy in which he lives. In other words, it is a part of his social liability. It is the incident of growth from a lower to a higher state. When men are seeking themselves, and do not know how to walk, and fall down, that is *hurt*, if it is bodily; and if it is moral, it is *suffering*. If a child puts its hand in the fire, it is *pain*; and it is pain that will keep the child from ever putting its hand there again. He has learned something. If a man, being selfish, and having once suffered from the results of selfishness, were as wise as the child that puts its hand in the fire, he would avoid selfishness in the future; but that is not the way of the world. A man, walking along a path at night, as long as it is smooth feels that he is in

the path; but by and by, falling into some quag, he says, "What! quags in good roads?" And then he says, "Oh! no, I am not in the road. The road is pleasant and easy; and if I get my feet into the mud, it is because I am not in the road."

What, then, is the fact but this: that if a man only knows the right path, he goes on without suffering, and that if he suffers, it is because he is not in the right path. Suffering is God's regent of the universe, saying, "The way is a way of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace; and therefore when you suffer it is because you are out of the way." So there is something to be learned in this direction. When the boys whisper and laugh, instead of studying their lessons, there comes a gentle rap, not hurting them much, which says, "The teacher is behind you, and you are not doing your duty;" and they gather up. And so there are inconveniences in life rapping us men, and saying, You are not doing your duty. But when boys are ugly and malicious and quarrelsome, and they are hitting each other, and pinching each other, and pinning each other, the school-master comes behind them with a most vehement souvenir, that teaches them more—namely, that they are wicked, and are doing wrong, first, in neglecting their lessons; and, secondly, in inflicting pain unnecessarily upon each other. And in life the things that men suffer are testimonies of the ever-watchful Master that is behind you, and saying, "You are neglecting your duty, and you are doing wrong." The way in which you should walk is a pleasant way, and suffering, in this world, is nothing but that necessary chastisement and pain which God has infixed throughout the whole divine scheme, in order to keep men from wrong paths, and keep them going toward that higher state where they are to emerge into immortality and glory.

Therefore it is that the two ideas are perfectly harmonious and consistent. You might call suffering the labor-

pain of virtue, being born into a higher state out of a lower. It is not a thing desirable in itself; but instrumentally it is desirable, as a motive, as a spur, as an incitement, as an inducement, in men, to rise to a higher state.

If this be so, I remark,

1. The search for the origin of evil, about which so much has been thought and said, is a mistaken search, in the direction in which men are looking for it. When men have squared the circle, and found the philosopher's stone, and discovered perpetual motion, then they will find this too. But they will not find any of them. They are, all four of them, mistakes. The reason why God made seeds instead of perfected fruit is the only question. Why did God make men at the bottom, and then say to them, "Climb clear up to the top?" Evil is nothing in the world but a part of the divine system by which we are to be unfolded. And if men were made to find their way up from nothing to something, through various gradations, and pain and suffering are but incitements and pressures to help them on, the question is not, "What is the origin of evil?" for the origin of evil is but another name for the origin of suffering. And suffering is not evil. You might as well ask what is the origin of a man's suffering when he is learning to drive nails, and he hits his thumb instead of the nail, as to ask what is the origin of evil. He does not know how to strike straight: that is the origin of it. What men call "evil" originates from their not knowing to carry their faculties. They were born without knowing it.

Here is a man with forty plenary powers in him, every one of which is a prince, every one of which is seeking development, and every one of which is left to find out, by experiment, its own nature, and capacity, and design. He was born without knowledge, for the most part, of himself. And, do you ask, what was the origin of his mistakes? Simply the fact that he did not know, and was born not to

know. What is the reason that a man who is lost in the woods travels, in finding his way out, ten miles, when he might get out by travelling one mile? Because he did not know the road, and he kept wandering about here and there to find it. And so men are wandering about in life to find themselves. And what are called sins are to be limited to those wrong things which men do on purpose. The rest are infirmities which God looks compassionately upon, and sorrows over. He punishes sins which are in the nature of purposed wrong-doing, and pities the infirmities which men fall into, not knowing how to do any better, or only partially knowing how to do better.

Let us not, therefore, look about and say, "How does evil get into the world?" for that question will only be answered when you can tell why God preferred to make men as he did make them, the sum of nothing, with the capacity to develop into infinite power in infinite directions. It pleased him to do it.

2. We see, from the statements that have been made, if they be accepted, what is the true and proper meaning of *self-denial*. One of the earliest lessons that a man learns is to be an animal. He learns the animal functions first. He learns the faintest animal relations of truth. Matter is the thing that first addresses itself to him. A child learns the physical globe before it even learns its mother. The mother is learned through the child's material wants. The first education of every human being in this world is to teach him to be a little animal. But very soon there begin to be conflicting claims in the child. And now comes the question of priority. And every once in a while there will come a time when there will arise a little conflict in the child's mind as to which shall rule, those faculties that represent the affections, or those that represent the appetites, and when one or the other must prevail. And if the child triumphs, and the affections prevail, that is *self-denial*. It is affection

saying to passion, "You are lower than I, and you must step down there and wait for me." That is self-denial. It is a higher faculty making a lower one keep down, and know its place.

Then, the moment the affections begin to get strong, there are moral sentiments which rise up and assert their authority over the affections. Questions present themselves where persons are called to decide whether they will follow their affections or their duty. Duty rises in every soul, and says, "I am higher than affection." And if there is a question as to which shall govern, duty must govern, and not affection. And affection experiences suffering. And this is self-denial. It is self-denial of a lower feeling for the sake of giving liberty and power and influence to a higher one.

Every time a true act of self-denial takes place, two things happen: first, a lower feeling suffers, because it cannot have its own way: and, secondly, a higher feeling rejoices, because it has its own way. There are two feelings that enter into every act of self-denial: one of sorrow, because a lower faculty is brought into subjection; and the other of joy, because a higher faculty is brought into the ascendancy.

Now see how this clears away all the absurd notions that have prevailed in this world about the mission of pain and suffering. Many persons say, "I ought to deny myself." They are going along in life very happily, and do not perceive any particular reason for changing their course, but they have read that a man must deny himself, and they say to themselves, "What shall I deny myself in? I wish I knew how I could deny myself." And they go to work and invent modes of self-denial. One person says, "I will not eat any butter." So he denies himself. Another person says, "I enjoy a good coat as well as anybody else; but, being a Christian, my duty is to deny myself; so I will get linsey-woolsey and let the broadcloth go." That is his self-denial. Men have no idea of what self-denial is. They are



floundering after something, they do not know what. They are searching for an opportunity for self-denial, not understanding that to deny one's self is simply to put down a lower feeling, in order to give a higher feeling ascendancy. You have an opportunity for self-denial every time you see a man. If you meet a man that you dislike, put down that hateful enmity of soul. That will be self-denial. Every time you see a person in misery, and you shrink from relieving him, then relieve him. That will be self-denial. Do not say, "I am so busy I cannot stop to see that little curmudgeon in the street;" but stop. God says, "You are all brethren;" and, ragged and dirty as that child is, it is related to you in the larger relationship of the eternal world; and you must not be so busy as not to have time to care for him. If your selfishness says, "I cannot stop; I do not want to be plagued with these little ruffians of the street," and a diviner element in the soul says, "Stop! neither business nor pleasure has any right here: religion and humanity and duty must rule here:" and if you obey the dictates of that divine element, then you deny yourself. You put down mean indifferences and pestiferous selfishness for the sake of giving a royal tone of joy to your upper nature, do you not?

"In honor preferring one another." This injunction suggests an ample field for self-denial. You that invent sack-cloth and hair-mittens to rub yourselves with, so as to get up self-denial and suffering; when you sit and hear your brother in the law, of the office next to yours, praised, what is it that makes you hold your breath? "Oh!" you say, "that is envy. I ought not to feel so." There is a blessed struggle. What is born out of it? If you rise superior to that comparison between yourself and him, and say, "I thank God that he is esteemed more than I am; I love and honor him, and I am glad to see his name go up, and it does not hurt me to have his name go above mine," then there is a glorious self-denial. What are the elements

of it? Why, putting down your own selfishness, and putting up the brotherhood feeling.

No man, then, need hunt among hair-shirts; no man need seek for blankets too short at the bottom and too short at the top; no man need resort to iron seats or cushionless chairs; no man need shut himself up in grim cells; no man need stand on the tops of towers or columns, in order to deny himself. There are abundant opportunities for self-denial. If a man is going to place the higher part of his nature uppermost, he will have business enough on hand. He will not need to go into the wilderness to deny himself. And, by the way, to go alone into the wilderness is no safeguard against evil. A man never went into the wilderness in this world that the devil did not go with him. In the city, the devil has so much to do that he cannot pay much attention to any one man; but in the wilderness he has you! It is a bad plan to keep by yourself too much. When you are under wholesome excitements in life, when you are made to vibrate and respond to genial influences, these things help you on toward self-denial.

It is not meant that a man should suffer because there is any good in suffering, in and of itself. Suffering is merely incidental. The good lies in the struggle in you between a higher and a lower feeling; and self-denial is the triumph of the higher feeling over the lower. Therefore, every man that suffers when he denies himself shows that the upper feeling is yet faint.

A man takes a musical instrument and undertakes to bring up one part of it, so that it shall sound louder than any other part. The moment he brings it up so that it sounds a little louder than the others, people say, "Yes, I think I do hear that upper note;" but it is so faint that a person has to put his hand to his ear to hear it. But by and by the man works the instrument so that out rolls this upper note so clearly that, although the under notes are there, every-

body says, "Ah! now it has come out; now I hear it; it is all right now." And a man that denies himself in the truest Christian way, does it so that the joy of the upper feelings rolls clear over the pain and suffering of the lower feelings. Where this does not take place, the self-denial is very imperfect.

3. In the line of this discussion we see, too, the fore-shadowings of the cross in human life. In the whole line of development we see, in this world, the great principle of love, which is divine, because it did not spring from anything that we can see, but from the original creative decree. The principle of love and the nature of love were certainly as directly from God, when it was infixed in the human composition, as anything that we can imagine. If you will watch the development of love as it takes place between the parent and the child, even in the savage state, you will see that there is infixed in the nature of human love a tendency to bear, not for one's self, but for others; to bear their troubles and cares.

The first experience we have of self-abnegation, joyful and beautiful, is where the mother bears for her child. It is not merely the love of reciprocity. The love that men mostly know in their adult life is the susceptibility of being played upon by others; of being made happy by the intercourse of other natures. That is a poor love. The nature of the truer love is to exercise the parental instinct. We see *substitution* in it. If the child does wrong, the parent takes the smart, and lets the child learn a lesson—that is, to some extent, for this cannot go to all lengths. Love attempts to substitute the experience of older hands and bodies and minds for the inexperience of younger ones, so that the child shall not suffer so much as it would if it had none to take care of it. Nay, we see *imputation* in parental love; so that the parent is all the time accounting with the child as if it had virtues that it has not. The parent, for instance, persuades the

child to do things which the child would not do of its own accord, and gives it large credit and large praise for that which the parent incited and fixed in the child.

4. We see love suffering in life. Although the various developments of love are imperfect, yet we see the sphere of these qualities widening and widening, until we see love in all the organisms of society, as existing in the intimate relationships of friend and friend, of parent and child, and of brothers and sisters. We see in love the overshadowings of that sublime disclosure which was made on the cross, of divine love. God so loved the world that he gave his Son to die for it. And what is revealed by that fact? That God had learned to do it? No; but that the faint snatches which we see of such a nature of love as is manifested in the family, are parts of the revelation of divine truth in nature, which was more gloriously revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Parental love is John Baptist to the atoning love of Christ Jesus. And though it is very imperfect, a mere scratch, simply an outline, shorthand, as it were, yet it is sufficient to prepare us to understand, and assist us in understanding, when the disclosure is made of it, that greater love in Christ Jesus, who gave himself, not only that he might redeem the world, but that he might redeem every individual in the world, making all men at last pure and spotless, when he shall present them before the throne of his Father in eternal glory.

This power, therefore, of perfectness to take on suffering, for the sake of shielding from suffering those that are in a lower sphere, is the secret of the Cross. The hidden mystery of Christ's sacrifice and death is not alone taught us in the New Testament. The expectation for it is created when we look out into nature and society. And when, afterward, we go back to the word of God, it is susceptible of no other interpretation but this—that God does bear the sins of men, and carry their sorrows; and that when he puts

men into a world where there are pain, and sorrow, and shortcomings, and infirmities, and sufferings, he does not leave them alone. He himself dwells in the household. And as a parent that is bringing up a child inflicts suffering and permits suffering to be inflicted upon the child, for his good, watching his progress and studying to meet his wants all the way up through his education; so God is the educator of time and the world, and by suffering he develops men to that perfectness which at last shall be without suffering in the eternal sphere.

5. In the light of these disquisitions, they that are in trouble or in sorrow must learn the true way out of it. There is but one way out of suffering, and that way is upward. All other ways are adjourning it, or preparing for its recurrence in even greater measure. When men suffer in any of the vicissitudes of life, and go down toward their passions as a refuge, or go out laterally, as it were, to hide themselves in amusements, their sufferings are like the blossoms of an apple-tree that fall without fruit, multitudes of them. No lesson is learned, no victory is gained, no strength is attained. But when a man suffers, and accepts the suffering, and says, "It is a messenger of God sent to teach me to rise higher in that part of my being in which I am living; to strengthen that which is good over against that which is bad: I must think higher; I must live better; I must be nobler; I must commune more with God; I must come nearer to the invisible and eternal world; the further I go down toward the animal, the more I must suffer; and the higher I rise toward the spiritual, the less shall I suffer"—when a man does this, he has learned the lesson that every one should learn. If God has sent afflictions upon you, whether they come from yourself or from your social liabilities—from your connection one with another—the golden gate that leads into the way which is pleasant, and into the paths which are peace, is an upward gate. And the nearer

a man can get to God, the less anything on earth can afflict him. That is one reason why prayer, even when men in their own consciousness are not Christians, is so soothing and quieting. In the act of lifting the soul up above its passions into the conscious presence of the Eternal, though it be blind, though it be the pleading of a child with an unknown Father, there is something that lifts a man in the right direction. But how much more when God is dearer to the soul than all the contents of earth; when the soul can say, "There is none on earth like thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee!" Communion with God is prayer—oh! what a refuge out of trouble! Oh! what a pavilion in which God does hide men, according to his promise, until the storm be overpast! Out of sorrow by going down? Ah! that is bad comfort. Out of sorrow by resorting to stoical philosophy? It only hardens and toughens the fibre of feeling. Out of the mere erosion of suffering? That is not a manly comfort. Oh! lift up your head. Find peace and comfort by giving flight to the higher elements of your highest nature: love, and faith, and hope, and joy in the Holy Ghost. There is the divine prescription. And there never was a trouble so grievous that there was not, in this joy in the Holy Ghost, assuagement and peace. There never was a heart so smitten that there was not restoration in true Christian faith.

When the rude ox or the fierce wind has broken off the shrub, and laid it down on the ground lacerated and torn, it lies there but a few hours before the force of nature in the stem and in the root begins to work; and soon new buds shoot out; and before the summer shall have gone round, the restorative effort of nature will bring out on that shrub other branches. And shall the heart of a man be crushed, and God send sweet influences of comfort from above to in-spirit it, and that heart not be able to rise above its desolateness?

What sorrow is there that has God's liberty to ride you as a despot? What bereavements did God ever give liberty to be your tyrant? What laws did God ever give leave to come to you and say, "I own you?" You are God's, and no one else's. And there is no suffering, no sorrow, no human experience, that you have not the power to rise above, to subdue—nay, to harness to you, and make carry you. For sufferings rightly understood are, as it were, God's coursers harnessed to your chariot to bear you up. Horses and a chariot of fire did the prophet have to take him to heaven; but he is not the only one that went to heaven in a chariot of fire. Thousands are riding in chariots of fire. Sorrow is the fire; and troubles are those coursers by which myriads of men are being drawn, in that flaming chariot, heavenward.

Do not understand, then, that suffering or sorrow are incidental or accidental. They are all of them divine. Rightly understood and rightly used, sorrow is to the man what the whetstone is to the razor. You are made sharper by it. Without it you very soon lose your edge, and cut dull. With sorrow men never forget. Sorrow is the trumpet that sounds through the camp when the enemy is near, that you may be aroused and ready to meet your adversary. Sorrow is that friendly blow by which you, sleeping in the midst of suffocating fumes, are aroused. For God does not mean that you shall perish. He loves you too well. Ah! is there not comfort in the declaration, "Whom I love I chasten, and scourge every son whom I receive"? "You had children," says God, "and you chastised them for your own pleasure; but I, that they may be partakers of my holiness." There is the Gospel; the whole of it.

Blessed are they that have sorrow. Sad are they that are without it. He must be a very good man that has lived in this world and has not had any trouble. Steamships do not care whether the wind blows or not, because they have in-

ternal motive forces ; but we are not steamships, and we need troubles as winds to bear us on. We make no voyages without troubles, unless we are very good indeed.

Blessed be God, then, that gives us sorrow upon sorrow, trouble upon trouble, stroke upon stroke. These things are so many knockings at the gate of heaven, saying, "Open, Lord." Let heaven's gate fly open when they fall on you. See to it that they take you to God. See to it that they take you to higher manliness and to God. Never in sorrow be sorry for anything which you have done that was right, and pure, and true. Never in sorrow say, "Oh ! that I had the leeks and onions of Egypt, and were not obliged to eat this food of the desert which I so much loathe." When God is taking you through the wilderness toward the promised land, never look back, nor shrink. Bear your trouble, and say, "Strike, God, and strike again, and as often as needful ; do anything to me and take anything from me ; but let me have thee, and life, and life eternal."



## L.

### DIVINE AND HUMAN COPARTNERSHIP.

FOWLER.

[CHARLES HENRY FOWLER, D. D., a gifted pulpit orator of the M. E. Church in the West, was born the son of a Canadian refugee, August 11th 1837. His boyhood and youth were spent on a farm in central Illinois. In 1859 he graduated with first honors from Genesee College, New York, and two years later from Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois. Dr. Fowler's ministerial labors have been devoted to Chicago, although he was offered the presidency of the North-Western University. Upon the martyrdom of Abraham Lincoln, he was chosen to deliver the commemorative eulogy in that city. His literary works include able contributions to the church periodicals, and a volume exposing the fallacies of Bishop Colenso. In the words of a co-laborer: "He is a man of marked intellectuality, of great imagination and fancy—withal, of great force of will, of tireless energy and industry. The pulpit is his throne, which he fills with a kingly grace." This Sermon was preached at the dedication of the Arch Street M. E. Church, Philadelphia, in 1870.]

*"For ye are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry: ye are God's building."—1 Cor. iii. 9.*

I LIKE this passage that I have read in your hearing as a text, because there is so much in it—simple and plain, and familiar, yet full, and possibly profound—certainly practical. It is an epitome of the divine economy; it is full of the richest and profoundest human philosophy; it is quivering all over with divine power. Like the nightly pillar in the camp of Israel, it stands in this epistle radiant and glorious with the divine presence. What an inlook it gives us, when we look carefully at it, into the mystery of our living and into the dignity of our fellowships, and into the glory of our destiny!

It is an entire income of divinity into humanity, with its mangers and its wildernesses, with its gardens and its Cal-

varies; and it is also a transfiguration—an exaltation of humanity under the divine commission, with its inspirations and its resurrections, with its ascensions and its enthronements, for we are “laborers together with God.”

I suppose, in the exposition of this text, like the exposition of most other texts of Scripture, that which is best is that which is simplest and most manifest on the surface. The critical putting of the passage is that you and I are workers together of or under God. The general application of the passage is that we are workers together *with* God, supported by the general Scripture teaching. The same truth is put in another passage by the apostle when he says: “We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, while God worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” And he also exhorts these same Corinthians as laborers together with God. So, it seems, we have a right to a joint application of the passage as it stands before us, that God and we are in copartnership.

Notice a moment the exceeding skill, almost amounting to a cunning perception of the case—the skill with which the apostle brings out the kind of work to be done by us in the very words used to put it: “Ye are God’s husbandry”—God’s farm, farm-making, farm-working. This rude Corinthian heart is to be brought in and subdued, so as to bear a gospel harvest. “Ye are God’s building”—an edifice erected, constructed—not an outgrowth, but here an erection, here a construction, here something done by an outside power—God’s building, a house in which God shall be at home—a house built around the idea of God’s presence, characters in which we are to live with God, which shall have all the sacredness of the inner sanctuary, and all the familiarity of the home. “Ye are God’s building.”

And pause now a moment to see how adroitly the apostle lets down these conceited Corinthians in the putting of the text itself. The text, back of our English version, has this suggestive thing in it. In this short sentence there is no

word at all to represent these Corinthians who are contending about men and about their personal advancement, but the name of God is put in full three times, and the Corinthians are only drawn in by the person of the verb; these conceited men are left out, and the Almighty is made the controlling thought of the text, and yet the copartnership is maintained—a copartnership in which all the power is of God, and all the glory belongs to God, and yet the power so adjusted that all—absolutely all—the responsibility rests with us. These are the conditions of our copartnership.

*This law of human and divine action—co-labor, laboring together—is a universal law.* You cannot touch humanity anywhere but you strike this truth. It makes up the warp and woof of nature, of our lives, of society; it is everywhere divine power and human agency—it is a combination of these forces. One fact indicating that is this:—

*Either element, when left to itself, fails.* Men have blundered concerning this subject, as concerning all other subjects, and whenever they have left out the divine element in their calculations, they have failed. Mere humanitarian systems that did not or ought not to pretend to be religions, but only systems of philosophy, built not upon the divine Christ, but upon the human Jesus, have demonstrated that, leaving out the supernatural power, they have failed to accomplish the supernatural work. They move among men doing a kind of human work, but they do not move among men doing the divine work. They somehow demonstrate that their systems are circumscribed by the bounds of their nationalities, and their influence seldom survives the sexton who digs their unwilling graves; that which is born of the flesh proves to be flesh; the fountain not bubbling on the summit, the stream never rises there. Having no power from on high, they necessarily fail to lift up fallen humanity.

And in accordance with this fact of the failure of the elements, when separated, we find this one thing in history:

the richest and choicest peoples—the peoples who have most culture and thought and education and intellectual power, are the peoples who have utterly died out of history; so that the perfect languages are the dead languages.

And parallel with this we find another fact as startling, that the low animal peoples who live a kind of sensual or animal life, who have no great outlook of thought, who mount to no summits of culture, who sink to no depth of philosophy—these are the peoples who live on and on through centuries. Humanity accepted as a fallen fact persists like an animal instinct through the ages; but whenever she undertakes to rise, she wears herself out by the endeavor. Leaving out the divine power, the elements fail because they are separated.

*And the divine element fails as utterly when separated from the human.* It seems to inhere in the nature of the case that they cannot believe except they hear, and they cannot hear except one be sent. And here is the human agency. The man who can sit down in a leaky boat and fold his arms, thinking that if it is the Lord's great will that he should be saved he will be saved, will find that God's great will will be done, and that it is his great will that he should go to the bottom, because God has no better use for such a man. And the churches which undertake to let the Lord do all their work are the churches whose work will never—*no, never* be done. The divine element in itself fails in the work. It seems to me conclusive, then, that, as the elements, when separated, fail, there is, in the purpose of God concerning it, this anticipated and necessary union.

Take another fact. *See how God works in things.* It is one vast plan spread out before us in such a way that we may, by chance, avail ourselves of the energies of nature to do our work, to carry our burdens. God turns the great wheels always one way, so that we may see them and catch the secret, find how they move, and throw about them the

belts of our creative and inventive thought, and thus, claiming our possible copartnership, cause things to come to pass. He gives us bodies, possible strength, time, opportunity, brain, but these, in themselves, are not enough. Left to themselves, they produce either the sloven or the savage—either the Bushman or the Sioux. Civilization means more than these. It means very much labor in the shop, very much weariness in the study, very much anguish in the closet, and very much patient on-going after the seers and the prophets. God gives soil, sunlight, moisture, nourishment, germs, but these are not enough. Left to themselves, they produce thistles and noxious weeds. There is required also your thought and nerve and plan and skill, and then you and God can produce a loaf of bread.

You wanted this church. God gave the stone and the clay, and the iron and the lumber, but not here. The stone was in the quarry, the clay was in the bank, the iron was in the vein, the lumber was in the forest, and you know what it has cost to put them together.

And this same old law holds as firmly over character as it does over materials. This poor man has fallen into bad habits, and staggered out of the way and gotten down into the street, until the filth is upon his garments. Now, there is no process by which he may come back to respectability that is not based on his individual struggle. Sometimes gold dust thrown into the air may dim or divert the public eye, but soon that is past, and the unfortunate victim is left to hew his way up to respectability at the hardest.

These are but material and social applications of a law that finds its first legitimate and original cause, the reason of its existence, back in our moral nature. If, then, we do actually find that, in the world about us, God does so work in the system of copartnership with us, need we be alarmed, overwhelmed, if he requires us in his spiritual interest, in our spiritual lives, to obey the same rule?

Take another fact that looks to this copartnership—the *fact of destitution*, anywhere—poverty—poverty of purse or of spirits: all poverty is inexplicable, except on the supposition of this copartnership. There is a beautiful island—Erin, the island of the heart—and yet her children actually gnaw their bones in famine. No fault of God. He loves Erin; he loves all men. Yonder, in the great valley between the mountains, waves a harvest large enough for all men. It needs the human instrumentalities to take yonder harvest to yonder starving ones. There, in the alley, comes up a boy, dandled on the lap of corruption, fed on vice, graduated in a brothel, trained up a thief, and turned out a cut-throat. He has no fair chance. No fault of God. God loves that little cut-throat as much as he does anybody else in his universe. Not his fault that he has no chance. Look, there are wide zones of fertile land, upon which all the cities may scatter their victims into freedom. God has provided for them. It needs the human intervention to make the right distribution. And then there are vast Christless empires which never heard of him. But it is no fault of God. He loves them; he is no respecter of persons; he willeth not the death of him that dieth, but he would that all men would turn and live. No Christ has touched their shores; no prophet has cried in their ears; yet it is no fault of God. Fault there must be somewhere. It is only a demonstration of the human element in the copartnership. If God could have his way, to-morrow's sun would not rise over an unsaved sinner in all the universe. If God's way could be carried out, every lost profligate would be accepted of God; for "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." Yea, more than that. If God could have his way, the very last prison-pen in all the universe would be open, and the very last mourning and sorrowing one would be lifted up into peace and purity and joy unspeakable. But there is in the way, the human element in the copartnership.

There is a human will in the path, and human rebellion in the way. No fault of God.

Take another fact looking to this copartnership. *All our blessings come to us through human instrumentality.* We have some elements—we have air and time and life, a few things from God directly, or apparently directly; and yet when you come back to them you find that we are, after all, related to them through some human instrumentality. How crude they are as they come from the Almighty!—hardly worth having. Indeed, it is not possible for us to have them without human instrumentality. Life itself is such a little, helpless thing; yet little as it is, it comes to us only by the tenderness of maternal love. We receive it through maternal agencies. And what a long journey it is from the helplessness of that little babe, only a lump of possibilities on the lap of its mother, to that stalwart man! It is a long way, and much drilling and wearing along the way to realize the power.

*Take this revelation of God, God's truth, his Word, too grand for our invention, and too vital for us to dispense with; and yet what a human thing it is!* Here you can find full-length portraits of the prophets and the seers. Here you can come in contact with living men—God-anointed, God-appointed, God-smitten men; yet men sent out to be the light of the world. This book, with the divine element left out of it, is like the sculptor's studio—full of statues, stone men; but when it accepts the divine element, these statues catch the inspiration of life, and go forth—not gods, but men, speaking to us God's secret by human lips, and yet with human speech.

The highest and the last demonstration of this is *seen in the incarnation itself.* It seems to me that when God would bring his salvation into the world—what he wanted was salvation—and when he would bring it into the world, he had to incarnate it in his own Son; he could come to us only in

the Son of Man. It is the only salvation that could by any chance reach us at all, if you will think about it. It seems as if somehow the remedial agencies came down into our weakness and touched them into power, so that these weak and broken elements rise up apparently instead of being lifted up, lifted up in fact; yet not by an outside power, but by an inside power, that has been catalogued with the fallen forces of humanity, so that Jesus enters into our humanity, is born under the law, is made like unto his brethren, and is obedient unto death, that he may come even to us, and give salvation that is in us and of us, yet supernatural.

*Look at these terms a little.* "Ye are God's husbandry," and the work there indicated shows a little something of what we are to do, and how much you need this divine help in the case. The old nature is to be grubbed out by a kind of clearing-up process. The old forest that occupies the soil and shuts out the light and prevents the good seed from getting root or nourishment, is to be taken down and transformed, through divine agencies, into a protection and defence for the heavenly crop; and this is no small work. This means earnest endeavor. Try it. Put yourself at the work. Stand against the flood. Run against the tempest. See how weak and utterly helpless you are without the divine power. And yet this work is to be done by you, and through you, God helping.

I think the figure looks, a little farther on, *to building your characters*. And this to me seems the core of this whole question—the building up of your characters into the likeness of God. Not by a mere human endeavor, but by the human strengthened and made out by the divine; not that you can do it alone and unfold from within you that which shall be pleasing to God, but that, with the divine power, every one of you can build up your character so that it shall be acceptable to God in our Lord Jesus Christ.



This sweeps out over the whole field of our character and destiny. And just here, let me say, we are liable, in touching any of these points and discussing questions of this kind, to go too far, or lose sight too much of the other side of the question. The problem of a religious life is made up of many equations and as many factors. Your religious character is many-sided. The Gospel comes to you many-sided. Here, seen from this stand-point, it is all divine; and seen from another, it is all human. Here it is all devotion; there it is all activity. Here it has the breath and the billow of emotion; there it glistens in the cold serenity of the intellections. Now we see it with the grip of a syllogism holding the convictions of the intellect; then it comes in among the intuitions, warming by the breath of inspiration. Now it stands erect, holding the reins of eternal obligation; next it settles upon the soul with dew like peace of heaven, with the impleadings of divine mercy, and thus wins us to God. It is many-sided. It is—Work out your faith, from your fingers' ends. It is one perfect system.

*The foundation of our hope is salvation by faith only.* It could not have been otherwise, even if God had not said: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Yes, the fact that eternal life is an *infinite gift* puts it outside the possibility of our earning it. What we earn is limited and measured by day or hour; but God's gift, eternal life, is infinite, and so necessarily a gift; and if a gift, necessarily to be taken by faith only, so that when the bond for the ten thousand talents is pressed for collection, then there is no footing at all left for works; it is only, Believe—solely by faith. And this freeness makes it a gospel indeed. It would be no gospel at all but for this. It is necessary that the system that meets us should be capable of delay, that we might put it off and off and off, even till life's latest hour, and then, by divine power, through faith, take life and live.

Aye, if I didn't believe that the very lowest mortal on earth—the vilest and lowest—even though he should stand on the very crumbling verge of time, falling headlong into the pit, if he would but look once toward Christ, and offer believing prayer, might be saved, I would never enter the pulpit again. It is because we need something to repair all our failures that we must have a system that comes only by faith.

Now, then, having *the one point of our pardon settled by faith, it seems to me the power of that faith must come out through works—divine aid, human activity.* Coming through our characters, then, it is not possible for God to save us without our activity. A salvation that would fall upon us from heaven would only crush us, not cure us. God slays not our power, but our sins; he saves us, not the remnants of us; he saves our forces, our humanity, our will, our ability to feel and act and be. He saves us, not slays us, by a system with which we have nothing to do. It seems to me—though it is a startling fact, it is true—that a man, full grown, lost in the solitude of his sin, plunging on in the loneliness of his suffering, a dethroned king, yet a king crowned and enthroned above his own wretchedness and sin—that such a being is worth infinitely more in the universe of God than a whole army of shining puppets, polished by no purpose of their own.

We are sometimes told that God might have sent angels to do this work he has left in our hands; that the work of saving men might have been committed to orders of life above us. I am not prepared to say that it is impossible, yet I am prepared to say that it is not thinkable to me. It is not possible in the light of thought. In the first place, it is not something to be put upon us, but something to be wrought within us; not an outside cloak covering over our old corruptions, but an inside life and power—something that takes the whole being and occupies every part and fibre; and so,

to be anything at all, must be worked out through the man himself, and cannot be put upon the man from the outside. Horace Bushnell has made a statement which is liable to be misunderstood, but which contains a substantial truth. When a bush is bent down in a forest, nature does not send another bush, nor yet a tree, to pick up the bush, but puts life and power into the bush itself. So it seems to me God operates upon us by his grace. He comes with his supernatural power into us, and works along the normal lines of our activity, and thus enables us to rise into his likeness.

And then, if there were any possibility that angels could come, and by swarming the whole vault above us into the brightest glory, and crowding in untold millions into the path of each wanderer, could hasten forward the salvation of one single sinner, the infinite love of God, that stops at nothing, would, of necessity, crowd all angels into this world of ours, and put an immediate stop to sin. But it is not in the nature of the case. We misapprehend the nature of sin itself. It is not something that may be put to death by an outside being; it can be killed only when the creature from whose bosom it leaps, and in whose purpose it lives, becomes the executioner. And we mistake the character of the work itself. It is not outside work, done for something else and somebody else; it is an inside work, done in and for us as the end. We do not work like hirelings, we are sons; we work not for wages, but an inheritance—an inheritance not to be received after some grave has been filled, but that is to be received here, and under God, and with God, to be worked out by us for the home yonder.

This outside work, pushing forward the interests of the Church, building edifices, attending prayer-meetings, going after the poor, and other Christian work that comes upon a Christian's heart that seems to be outside, may be, after all, only one field for his development. Yonder is a man who goes into a shop to make an engine. Unwittingly, he de-

velops his arm, fills out his chest. Yonder man goes into a gymnasium, swings dumb-bells, climbs ropes, leaps bars, pounds bags of sand, and the like. Wittingly, he develops his chest and arms. Now, in God's plan, both these systems work in together. Many a thing seems like making the engine, doing some outside thing, yet actually it is the only way by which we can be brought on in this co-operating work with God. And it is just here that the necessity is put upon us to do so much outside work for God; and the man who does it—who carries the burdens, who gets under the tremendous pressure, who agonizes in the darkness—is not the man to be pitied; but the man who does not do it—the man who dodges—he is the man to be pitied; the sick man, whom the Lord has to nurse and lead on to heaven, and whom he stands a great chance of losing before he gets there with him, he is the man to be pitied, because it is in this process of co-operation with God that this poor material is fashioned up into a man, then a saint, then an angel.

There is another thing that is true. If this fact of co-operation is true, *then Christ's kingdom goes forward or is retarded, according as we are active or negligent*. I think that is an inevitable sequence from the proposition that we are co-workers with him. Then, what follows? Just as the falling of an autumn leaf will jar the most distant sun, so the slightest faltering of even the weakest and lowest saint holds back the coming of the kingdom of Christ. Look at the case a little. There is no lack of love on his part. He has come for the sole purpose of saving men. He came into the world at the earliest hour. All through the ages he carried humanity on his heart, crying: "O that there were such an heart in you that you would hear my voice!" longing to come always from the moment of the first transgression, anxious to come to the oppressed and sorrowing and wounded, to comfort the mourning, and bind up their wounds. And this, of necessity, in the nature of infinite

love. He could not have infinite love and hold back anywhere. It must press out at the earliest chance. So he waits, and waits, and waits for his people. He waited four thousand years for a virgin to say: "Thy will be done." I doubt not he waited a thousand years for grand old Martin Luther, and that he stood and watched and looked for twelve centuries for the coming of John Wesley; and to-day he waits, and his cause hangs back, and his kingdom is delayed, because we, his children, allow our hands to hang down. He is here for the salvation of all men, coming to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and it delays because we lack faith and devotion and consecration. The thought to me is oppressive. We are so related to God's kingdom that our lack of prayer and faith and sacrifice actually retards the coming of the kingdom.

With this immense responsibility, as we might expect, there comes *also a commensurate dignity*. It could not be otherwise. And yet it is to me incomprehensible. We can only look at it a little. It is amazing to me that such a being as Jesus Christ, full of his infinite love, clothed in light, the first-born of every creature, by whom all things consist, King of kings and Lord of lords, invisible, immortal, eternal, God over all, blessed for evermore—it is to me inconceivably grand that such a being as Jesus Christ has actually burst into our humanity, and is here ready to work, here for our salvation; but more than this, he takes us, little and weak and frail as we are, into copartnership with himself, and we, little as we are, are under his divine commission. And more than this, we are sent out to have his character, to be like him, to repeat his wonderful words, to walk among the sorrowing, and tell of his compassion. This to me is the infinite thing. All else in life is but as dust and ashes, and the chance of standing for him among the dying and sinning, and there crying, "Behold, behold the Lamb!" is more than all else in this life. It seems to me, if we could but see the dignity of the work he has given us,

its power, depth, height, glory, irresistible victory, divine radiance, we would go though we starved; we would work though it were a thousand years; we would pray on while we had breath. It seems to me, in this fact, our relationship to Christ is the highest of all possible dignities; and yet we have such a miserably poor way of measuring dignity, getting at the real power in the case, we can, at best, only get little glimpses, and only guess concerning it.

It is something, too, *to be a citizen of this republic*; it means something, though we cannot comprehend it. That poor soldier-boy may not know the day of the republic's birth, nor the number of her commonwealths, nor count the stars of her flag even, and yet he wears the sign of the nation's power; and it is something to be a citizen of this republic, because there is no land on all the earth, no dungeon anywhere under the sun, no island in the sea, where prince or potentate can harm a hair of his head with impunity. Let the despot touch him, and forty millions of citizens rise for his defence! I remember reading awhile ago, how that, yonder in South America, a poor Norwegian sailor, by some transgression of the local laws, was involved in serious trouble. The petty government tried him for conspiracy; they found him guilty, and sentenced him to death. He did not understand his crime, nor his relations to their government; he only knew the horror that was coming upon him. But the ministers of the governments of England and of the United States interfered in his behalf; they protested; the petty authorities insisted; the ministers forbade the execution, but the local government took the victim out, and drew up the line of soldiers for his execution, when the representatives of these two great governments, taking the flags of the two countries, went in before the man and wrapped around him the Stars and Stripes and England's flag, and the soldiers dared not shoot. It meant something to be a citizen of the United States, or Great Britain; but infinitely more than this is it to be a citizen of that country

beyond. We are brought into fellowship with God, and permitted to work in copartnership with him; and though little, and ignorant, and unable to count his stars, nor tell his glory, nor know the time of his coming, yet we are in copartnership with him, and his flag is over us, and his angels are about us, and absolutely nothing can, by any chance, harm us. God's infinite love comes in just back of our weakness. He has given his only begotten Son for us, and with him will he not freely give us all things? This tenderness comes to us so that we may know that we are his, and kept by his almighty power.

I remember once standing by the surging billows, all one weary day, and watching for hours a father struggling beyond in the breakers for the life of his son. They came slowly toward the breakers on a piece of wreck, and as they came the waves turned over the piece of float, and they were lost. Presently we saw the father come to the surface and clamber alone to the wreck, and then saw him plunge off into the waves, and thought he was gone; but in a moment he came back again, holding his boy. Presently they struck another wave, and over they went; and again they repeated the process. Again they went over, and again the father rescued his son. By and by, as they swung nearer the shore, they caught on a snag just out beyond where we could reach them, and for a little time the waves went over them there, till we saw the boy in the father's arms hanging down in helplessness, and knew they must be saved soon or be lost; and I shall never forget the gaze of that father. And as we drew him from the devouring waves, still clinging to his son, he said, "That's my boy, that's my boy!" and half frantic, as we dragged them up the bank, he cried all the time: "That's my boy, that's my boy!" And so I have thought, in hours of darkness, when the billows roll over me, the great Father is reaching down to me, and, taking hold of me, crying, "That's my boy!" and I know I am safe.

## L I.

### THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

WALDEN.

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*"A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."*  
—Prov. xvi. 9.

I BRING before you to-day a subject which touches so nearly the heart and life, that, of all religious subjects, a more than usual interest centres in it. It is that which human beings find most occasion to ponder over, which they most desire to understand, and are most anxious to believe in. And yet it is that which is viewed with greater indistinctness, greater misgiving and doubt than any other truth which has descended out of heaven from God.

No other truth is more clear to the understanding, none has had more express revelation, and yet because of its vital nearness to human interests, it suffers this singular eclipse of faith. This is not strange—for what we have most reason to wish true we naturally most fear may be false. The more our happiness is bound up with it, the more solicitude do we feel that our dependence be not a delusion.

The subject I refer to is THE SPECIAL PROVIDENCE OF GOD.



Is there anything to our *hearts* nearer? Is there anything to our *minds* sometimes further off?

When we speak of the Providence of God, when we give Him that beneficent and all-expressive name, we mean that the Great First Cause is not a cold and distant Force, but a personal Being, working under and behind the laws of His Universe, and in a relation to His creatures which partakes of the nature of a Fatherhood—a Fatherhood of infinite meaning, a Fatherhood so profound, so minute, so far-reaching, so complete, that the human relation of parental love and care, strong as it is, is but a dim shadowy gleam beside that ineffable Light. If we, poor, imperfect beings, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more does our heavenly Father know how to provide for us! This is our Saviour's own declaration. It is His own amazing projection of what an infinite Father God must be, if He be in that relation to His creatures at all.

It is now my object, so far as I may, to give as definite form to this all too shadowy shape of God, as we have reason and revelation for, in order that the Comforter may truly come, that our lives may have the immense consolation, and our hearts the sublime consciousness that God is daily walking with us, an infinite Fatherhood by our side, in unceasing love, solicitude, and care perpetually hedging us about.

When this subject comes directly to an intelligent, thinking mind, the first misgiving which would seem to resolve God into a shadow rises from a consideration of the *immensity of the Universe*. This was the thought which momentarily shook the faith of one of the first intellects of the age in the Gospel, (Daniel Webster). So essential was the question with him that he caused the record of his mental conflict to be graven on the granite of his tomb, thus:—

“Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the Universe in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason

for the faith that is in me ; but my heart has always assured and reassured me that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine Reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it."

Would God, he asked, do so much as send his beloved Son to die for the inhabitants of such an infinitesimal planet as this? And these just quoted words are the balances, as it were, in which he weighed the great consideration. In the one scale the immeasurable vastness of space in the Universe ; in the other the equal vastness of meaning in the great Utterance of our Saviour, and before the weightiness of its deep things of God, as dropped from Christ's eternal fingers, the scale of the material flies upward, the ponderous Universe is found wanting !

So in the contemplation of any other and lesser form of Providence. The more minute the interposition the more doubtful becomes the mind as to whether it can really be. And yet it ought to be easy for any mind to reason itself clear of this superficial embarrassment. If God could and would come as Christ to this infinitesimal world, He certainly can and will come to any extent nearer, and personally interpose to secure the utmost infinitesimal interest in it. There can be no limit to His care in whatsoever direction it may proceed forth. The man who is convinced of one must be convinced of the other also. If you believe that God would give such testimony as the *sending of His Son*, to the importance of this world in His Divine estimation, an importance which does not consist in material extent, then you cannot stop short of the belief that every other form of His Providence, however minute, is not only possible but inevitable. He may as soon reach down His Almighty arm to guide the tottering steps of a little child as send His angel to save a falling world.

The doctrine of the Redemption of mankind is pre-eminently a doctrine of Providence. It foreshadows, of itself, the whole character of the Divine Being in that relation. For in it He works to usward not only in the great gift to the world of His Son; but He enters into the recesses of every individual heart, ministering, strengthening, and consoling, as the Holy Spirit. If any one questions whether God would concern Himself with human affairs, the case might be rested here, in the fearful alternative it leaves. To deny the doctrine of Providence is to deny the existence of the Gospel, and to say that there is no such thing as the love of God in the world. Is any one ready to sit down in this desolation?

But, apart from this deduction from the Gospel revelation, there are some natural considerations underlying it, which after a while receive its great confirmation. Recur then to the question: In view of the immensity of the Universe, whether God would probably interpose at all in the affairs of such an insignificant atom as this world materially is? The mind which is familiar with the infinite distances which spread out beyond the stars, and realizes that no matter how far exploration may sweep, no wall can rise, no limitation be, that space is endless, boundless, measureless,—the mind familiar with this realizes that even such a ponderous planet as this world seems to be, is, in its relation to all *that*, simply nothing. And yet take the whole solar system, and put it in the same ratio to infinitude,—is it not equally small? Take the whole visible firmament which encloses this globe like a blue sphere studded with constellations, take every glorious sun on which the telescope has fixed its piercing eye, gather the whole immensity together, and put it over against illimitable space, and is it not equally insignificant with this little earth? It must be so. There can be no *great*, no *small* in the eyes of God, on the scale of great and small by which man measures. The conception of importance

in the Divine Mind must depend on other relations and principles of comparison than we wot of.

And as it is with space, so it must be with number. Infinite myriads of creatures, countless grades of intelligences, cannot lessen the importance of the single individual anywhere. Millions of Gabriels cannot by excess of archangelic light obscure the outline of one single human being in the field of the Divine contemplation. Nor can all the splendors of Heaven, in all their infinitudes of existence and joy, shut out by comparison this humble and sinful earth from our heavenly Father's radiant door.

Infinite space, infinite numbers, infinite conditions of being and glory, only bring back the mind to the individual, and to a wonderment as to what God's measurement and standard of importance is. The whole intellect comes oscillating back from its sweeping search for God in the outer Universe, and finds itself swinging into the opposite Universe of the Spirit. The alternative is clear. God is among us. God lives for the individual. His Providence moves to the *one*. It concentrates upon the infinitesimal, not, as we are so apt to think, goes expanding upon the infinite. There is no limit to the minuteness of His care. It must be in the order of His infinite nature to go into infinite detail. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father." "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" "Except the Lord build the house, their labor is

but vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." So pervading, so minute, is this Providential oversight, that nothing is beyond His interposition,—not even the fortuitous things of every day, those broken links of change and chance which seem to lie outside the endless chain of cause and effect. It is written that even "the *lot* is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

In close connection with this clear movement of God towards us comes another consideration. His whole character as a Creator, and the whole order of Creation, foreshadow Him as a Providence. Every work of His hands is stamped with His lineaments as a personal and providing Being. Take, for illustration, our own physical frame. What could bespeak more the superintending, protecting, guarding, nurturing character of Him who made it? Look at our outward furnishing. See this strange and convoluted thing the brain, so full of our deep, mysterious life, the throne of the intellect, the closet of the affections, the shrine of the soul. The pressure of an infant's finger would paralyze it. A blow would destroy this glorious organism, and drive its spirit forth. Who built up round it an ivory wall of protection, who arched over these wondrous hemispheres, and made the seat of our consciousness the very citadel of our being? Look at these windows through which the mind gazes out into the world, and through which the world sends its myriad subtle messengers winged for communion with the inner spirit. Who set them for protection far back within those deep embrasures, beneath "this dome of thought and palace of the soul"? Who hung before them these fringed curtains, to veil them alike from the splendors of the sun, and from the motes floating in the sunbeam? Stretch forth your hand!—that marvellous mechanism of skill and power! Who provided it with the manifold means for its endless offices? A great surgeon has written an immortal book on the extraordinary capacities hid

in the human hand. Who furnished it? Who, but He "that taketh up the isles as a very little thing" and "measureth the waters in the hollow of His hand." Who gave the seed its husk, the tree its bark, the fish its shell, the beast its skin, for protecting defences? What is that order which brings a congress of nature around each little buried seed, to tear away its shroud, and open the doors for its resurrection?—the rain and the sun visiting it like twin angels from above, the secret powers beneath touching it with life, and urging it forth into the upper air. And behold the bounties of nature everywhere, the splendors of earth, and sea, and sky, tributary to man! Who set even those immensities, the stars, to shine from age to age, like guardian spirits, and sentinels of Heaven at their stations, at once the outposts of a greater life, and the lights of this nether world? The motions and arrangements of a Providing God are all around us. The essence of Creation is Providence. Creation is the adumbration of God, as providing for us, and for ever moving down toward us, in minute and constant care. We cannot fix His limit. There can be none to His loving-kindness and tender mercy. It is over *all* His works.

We find another declarative fact in the world, which brings God even nearer in this beneficent form of His being. The very way in which human history has unfolded itself has been on this order of infinite providing. Time is full of especial men—providential characters—men rising up here and there to fulfil a purpose. Adam created to populate the globe. Noah saved to rescue the race. Abraham chosen to preserve the knowledge of God. Moses appointed to organize the people of God. So all over the earth. Great monarchs, great warriors, great statesmen, great inventors, great discoverers. Alexander, Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, Columbus, Washington—every one an apostle of a peculiar mission. "God said, 'Let Newton be!' and all 'was light!'"

Every one has done his appointed part in the world's pro-

gress. We easily see these conspicuous giants. But is God's equipment confined to them? Has not every one of us his own part in the world's great order? If it is true in such large historic instances, it must be equally so in everyday individuals, for the same God worketh to usward. "Every man's life is a plan of God," exclaims an eminent theologian of this day. What Christ said of Himself each of us also may say of his own self: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." There is no one that lives, however humble, who does not carry this Providential ordinance in his breast, and its outward guardianship around him, until his end be accomplished. We are lesser mirrors of our Master. He was the pre-eminent instance of a life on a Providential order. He was furnished for His work. We also are furnished for ours. The power of God enveloped Him from the manger to the sepulchre. It envelopes us also from the cradle to the grave. His life is the nearest, most touching evidence of God's love and care reaching down into the very depths of our hearts, and preparing us for the life eternal. Oh, wondrous argument! "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" The life that follows in His steps, that moves on His order of faith, and goodness, self-sacrifice, and the love of God, is a life along a pathway like His illuminated even if full of sorrow, and like His with everything working together finally for good. "Humble *yourselves*, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt *you* in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

You are now prepared to see the fullness of meaning in these counsels:

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." "Be careful for nothing;

but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God."

No life is complete; no heart can be truly happy, which does not feel enclosed by the personal guardianship of God. It is the inmost principle of Christianity. The Gospel is its most triumphant manifestation, and of its golden threads the whole texture of Scripture is woven. Whatever happens, good or ill, it is of God, all in the compass of His design, under His vigilant consciousness, provided or permitted in His own wisdom for the best of purposes. I know how hard it is when the tide of adversity is bearing us down, wrecking our fortunes, washing away our works, disappointing our expectations, or exciting us with apprehensions of disaster in the deep obscure to come, I know how hard it is for even the most faithful soul to keep up its tranquillity and calmly rely on Jehovah-jireh. As we are apt to see things in this world, everything appears, in some respects, to be abandoned to its own natural course, and we sometimes to be abandoned with it. The misgiving heart inquires: *Will* God<sup>d</sup> interpose? *Can* He come in among the operations of His own law, and stop its wheels or roll them back, and if He can, will he do it for me? Oh ye of little faith! When the storm raged on the lake of Galilee, and the waves threatened to engulf the little fishing-boat, and hardy seamen gave up in despair and cried out for fear, was not Providence behind those laws of the air in all its tumultuous fury? Was He not asleep in the hinder part of the ship? Did He not wake to the prayers of his followers, and bid the storm be still? The history of the soul is full of great interpositions worked in the eternal interest of man, and its daily experience is of constant inspirations, nurturing and guarding the inner life in the same everlasting interest. Are there none also in the outer life, minute and unseen, sustaining and protecting in His career even the humblest being among us? Remember, God works from



His infinitude usward, in things temporal as well as things eternal. And remember, above all, that there is a power in man on earth which is correspondent to this will of God in Heaven. So imminent is Providence, and so near the presence of God, that this puny being can summon the divine love to his aid whenever he will. The cry of the fishermen, "Lord, save us! we perish!" brought Him instantly near, "whose pavilion is in the dark waters, whose way is in the deep, and whose footsteps are not known." And the Divine voice exclaims to us "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God." "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." It is in the power of prayer to bring the sheltering pinions of the Almighty Spirit around us, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. Man hath even this wondrous correspondence with God, and God this unspeakable expression of love and demonstration of Providence to man!

May I detain you a moment more to touch upon one other misgiving of the doubting spirit? Everything it says does not work together for good to those who are good. The wicked most often flourish; the righteous most often perish. The sinner lives in prosperity and joy; the saint is often overwhelmed with suffering and sorrow. It is even so. The necessity that it should be so is the overshadowing black cloud of this world. Solomon noted it ages ago. "All things," said he, "I have seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness." The world is all too small, and time too short, for life to fully explain itself here. The great issues of Providence require more room than this little earth. Above this black cloud which lowers upon our life is the blue and glistening expanse of another world. "Our light

afflictions are but for a moment :” There comes hereafter “a far exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Trouble is sometimes disciplinary, sometimes otherwise necessary, and always Providential. The silver lining to that cloud is the gleaming promise of a life beyond, where suffering will turn into joy, and all things most sadly wrecked and oft irreparable here, will find their happy compensation and reparation there. “All things *will* work together for good to them who love God.” The goodness of Providence in this life guarantees a greater goodness in the life to come. Be patient, be faithful, and be resigned ! “Trust thou in the Lord, and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed.”

Let us live in the benignant light of this faith in a heavenly Fatherhood. “O Lord,” said the prophet, “I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” “A man’s heart,” echoes the sage, “deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.” Have we not felt sometimes a great Hand, let down and guiding us, as in our blindness we wandered astray ! Have we not felt, yes even seen, that great shadowy Hand gently turning our course, giving our thoughts a diversion, or our affections an impulse, or illuminating us for a moment with some strange inspiration, so that we might turn aside from a pitfall of danger, or be led into a path of prosperity ? We have all had that experience. We can look back and wonder at the occasions in this apparently inexorable world of cause and effect, and dreadful dislocation, when an interposing Hand has come tenderly down to guide our ignorant heart aright. What marvellous loving-kindness was it that once found you in terror, in torture, in distress, and that with its Almighty finger touched other events, and turned other minds, and arrested other movements, to set you free, to thank, and praise, and adore Him !

This is what we have to realize. That law and nature may have their order, but that the Love of God is behind all.

They move aside when His warm personality moves forward. "Call it fatalism," wrote Dr. Kane, in the midst of the Arctic desolation, "as you ignorantly may, there is that in the story of every eventful life which teaches the inefficiency of human means, and the present control of a Supreme Agency. See how the relief has come at the moment of extremity, in forms strangely unsought, almost at the time unwelcome; see, still more, how the back has been strengthened to its increasing burden, and the heart cheered by some unconscious influence of an Unseen Power."

Oh! the cheering thought of being cared for by One infinite in love for us, and as infinite in power to watch over and guard us. "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear! The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid! In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, He shall set me up upon a rock."

## LII.

### A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

STOCKTON.

[The life of THOMAS HEWLINGS STOCKTON, D.D., of the Methodist Protestant Church, was a loving protest against the alienation of Christians by the bitterness of sectarianism. He was born at Mount Holly, New Jersey, in 1808, and entered the ministry in his twenty-first year. As a preacher, he had rare gifts of eloquence—a keenly-sensitive emotional nature, great ideality, a creative imagination that gave heavenly truths and facts visible being, a spirituality of soul that made him unworldly and child-like. Thrice he was elected chaplain to the United States House of Representatives, and once to the Senate. His pastoral life was consecrated to the aim—noble, but now unattainable—of uniting “all who love the Lord Jesus Christ” on the pure and catholic basis of faith implicit in the Holy Bible. He died in Philadelphia, October 9th 1868, and his church-building is now used by Spiritualists. Besides many fugitive pieces, he wrote: “Sermons for the People,” “Poems,” a series of the “Paragraph Bible,” “Stand Up for Jesus,” a ballad commemorating the dying words of Rev. Dudley A. Tyng, and a posthumous volume, edited by his son, “The Book Above All.” By permission this Sermon is taken from the first work.]

“*Glory to God.*”—Luke ii. 14.

I DIVEST myself of sensation. I withdraw myself even from the organs of intellect, sentiment, and affection. I abstract myself entirely from my physical constitution. I throw myself as a pure spirit into the original condition of immensity and eternity. God alone is there. I commune with him—spirit with spirit. I learn that he desires to share his infinite felicity with other consciousness than his own; and that his perfections have composed a theory of creation. What that theory is, I am not informed; but am satisfied that whenever it shall be disclosed it will glitter with all the insignia of his own sovereign distinctions.

Resuming my natural sympathies with the universe, I hold it in contemplation. I see its throne. God is on it. A heaven-full of cherubim and seraphim shine and sing around it. Beyond heaven, innumerable and magnificent systems of suns, comets, planets, and satellites, map off the darkness with golden lines of silent glory, and fill up the vacuum with the pulse, and thought, and action of life everlasting. The genius of the Mind of minds has made itself creative; the theory of eternity is embodied in time; and while God withholds not a smile at the faithfulness of the mirror before him, the mirror kindles with still more glowing beauty, reflecting his smile and the bliss by which it is brightened.

I look again. The pavilion of God is closed, and his throne is shaded within its folds. At the sight, the multitude of worshippers suspend their praise. There is silence in heaven. The fellowship of anxiety prevails. Soon they descry afar off a returning host. As they come nearer, they are seen to consist of two orders. In one, every brow is crowned, and every crown adorned with a single star. In the other, a royal breast-plate gleams on every purple robe. They are the morning stars and the sons of God. They went out to witness the creation of a world. As it rose, they welcomed it with ecstatic music. They saw it perfected; saw it filled with living things; saw its paradise planted and burst into bloom; saw the manly majesty and womanly beauty of its wedded rulers; spent the first Sabbath with them, and exulted in its holiness and bliss. But now they come, sad that they went. As they alight upon their native landscape, and fold their plumes among the myriads that gather around them, they tell the story of sin and death!—The whole multitude turn toward the throne, and wonder no more that the folds of the pavilion are drawn closely around it.

Touched with a desire to behold the scene of guilt, and

the parties involved in it, I leave the centre of creation and tend toward its circumference. I find a new system, and less magnificent than many I have passed. I alight upon its sun, and survey its comets, planets, and satellites. The planets are divided into three classes. Those in the first and remotest class are comparatively of great size, and beautifully adorned—one with belts, another with rings; one with four moons, another with six, another with seven. Those in the second and middle class are very small. The four in the third and nearest class are larger than the latter, but not one of them is even a tenth part as large as the largest of the first class. In this nearest class, I find the one I seek. It is the third from the sun, and moves along its orbit attended by a single moon. I descend upon it, and stand on a hill overlooking paradise. The garden of the Lord has not yet lost its loveliness, though its sinful tenants, ashamed and sorrowful, hide themselves in its deepest shadows.

I commune with my own thoughts. What is such a world as this, and who are these its occupants, that for anything done here, the hallelujahs of heaven should be hushed, and the throne of the universe be darkened? I am overwhelmed by the realization of the infinite holiness and sensibility of the divine law. There is no point in immensity where the finger of sin can touch it, without that touch being felt by him who ordained it. But why is it not avenged? Even as a bubble on one of its own streams, so might such a world dissolve and vanish. Why does it not? Ah me! I feel the cause. Those timid criminals, trembling in the shade, have been quickened into immortality by the breath of God; and there is not an archangel in heaven whose spirit shall not fail with age as soon as theirs. Nor only so: but those same fugitives are the representatives of innumerable millions of immortalities like themselves—enough, if they should be finally translated to heaven, to make it necessary to employ

ages in preparing mansions to receive them. What now? Who shall terminate this awful suspense—and how shall it close?

I return whence I came. The cherubim and seraphim still stand, in adoring silence, in the strange twilight. But lo! the pavilion opens—and all is glory! A feeling of intenser love comes with it, exciting a rarer rapture. The angel of the Lord appears at the right hand of the divine Presence. He announces the adoption of a plan of redemption—the necessity of sacrifice to the accomplishment of the plan—the inability of any less than himself to make the sacrifice—and his own assumption of the obligation, to be discharged in due time. He summons the morning stars and the sons of God to attend him again; commands the resumption of worship by the multitude left before the throne, and comes away on his mission of mercy to this far-off sphere of sin. With the noblest burst of music that heaven ever heard still seeming to follow, I come with them, and hover in the midst of the holy train, while the angel of the Lord himself descends to the garden, calls the sinners before him, gives law to their changed estate, intimates the scheme of salvation, and sends them forth from their forfeited inheritance, to engage in toil, endure pain, and hopefully await the performance of his promise.

The angel and his retinue re-ascend. I remain to see the influence of the first death. Men multiply. Sins multiply. Sorrows multiply. All the good of the former estate perishes. As some noble tree, in the autumn, feels its life returning to the soil from which it rose in the spring, and sees its foliage withering and falling from its branches, till, one by one, they are all stripped and bare, so the spiritual life of man returns to its source in the Godhead, and all his beauty and glory fades and dies. The tree is not hopeless. Another spring may warm its life up again, through every branch, and into every twig, and cover it all over with

leaves, and blossoms, and fruit. And so, man is not hopeless. Redemption may hereafter invest him with fairer and richer felicities than he knew at first. But, for the present, he perishes. Intellect dies: reason, judgment, memory, imagination, knowledge, wisdom, truth, all die. Sentiment dies: gratitude, benevolence. Honor, courage, virtue, conscience, all die. Affection dies: love, friendship, joy, peace, all die. Ignorance, like that of the brute, prevails. All notion of the magnificence of the universe is lost. Even the magnitude of the earth is not suspected. Men deem it a small plain; the sky above it a solid dome; and sun, moon, and stars a set of interchanging lamps. But not only is all proper notion of the works of God lost: God himself is not in all their thoughts. They have a dreamy remembrance of something divine; but know not whether it is one or many, little or great, or where or how it is to be found. They seek it in the objects around them, even inferior to themselves. They think they see it in the eye of a beast, in the coil of a reptile, in the wing of a bird, in the color of a plant—and so worship these. Meantime, the passions of the brute awake to confirm and aggravate this ignorance. Gluttony, lust, jealousy, murder; and, with these, vices of which brutes know nothing—drunkenness, cursing, lying, covetousness, fraud, slavery, war, and a thousand others. In the midst of all, a little spiritual life is preserved—like an evergreen, with a waste of wintry snow around it. I see a venerable patriarch, here and there, who builds an altar to the true God, and lays his offering on it. An angel descends, stands by the altar, blesses the worshipper, touches the offering with heavenly fire, and ascends with the flame. The patriarch learns much of God—his will, ways, works, and designs; but still all is confined within the apparent littleness of the circle of the senses. To him, the sky is simply God's palace; there is his throne; thence he looks to the ends of the earth, or, from horizon to horizon; the lightning is the glance of his eye, the thunder is the



utterance of his voice, the cloud is his chariot, and the winds are his steeds. So near is he, at all times, that he not only sees every sacrifice that is made to him, but smells the savor of it, as it rises from the altar. Therefore, too, he so easily hears and answers prayer.

Time passes. All the life left on earth is enclosed in an ark. There it burns, brightly but gently, with a world of wild waters around it, striving to quench it. But God dries the top of a mountain, sanctifies it as an altar, puts the living fire on it, hangs the rainbow over it, and smiles to see how the waters rush away from its kindling and spreading glory, and gather their waves for ever within impassable bounds.

Other ages pass. Men multiply again. Sins multiply again. Sorrows multiply again. Intellect, sentiment, affection, die again. Yet, here and there, in the withered wilderness, a true altar is raised, and the fire from heaven again descends upon it. Ere long, a nation of slaves, whose chains melted from their forms at the flash of an angel's eye, and who marched over a path of pearl through the valley of the sea, between mountains shining all through like crystal, pitch their camp in the shadow of a desert cliff, and see that same pavilion which was folded round the throne of the universe, in the hour of heaven's strange twilight and hushed hallelujahs, borne by the morning stars and sons of God, and rested, with its fullness of inner glory, amidst the trumpetings and shoutings of the whole host, on the trembling summit. They see their leader enter the pavilion with the pale face of a man, and come out again with a countenance glowing like a God. He bears in his hand a law written by the fingers of Him who dwells within those sacred folds. They make a tabernacle, according to the pattern shown in the mount, and the priests bear it from station to station, for forty years, under the angel's watching, till Jordan pauses to let it pass; and Zion rises up to receive it, and Lebanon bows in homage from afar; and the great sea,

turning its billows and foam into gold, in the smile of the setting sun, rolls its tribute along the coast from Syria to Egypt, and kneels and kisses the soil which is hallowed from shore to shore by the presence of the Shekinah and the tribes of the chosen.

Other ages pass. The temple shines on Moriah. The sky above it gleams with prophetic visions. The land around it blooms with symbolic blessings and smokes with symbolic curses. The rocks, groves, and streams; the palaces, cottages and tents, are all alive with the bugles of faith, the harps of hope, the lutes of love, and the timbrels of salvation. The thrill is felt in other lands. A gush of expectation is felt at the heart, and pulsates to the extremities of the world.

Four thousand years have rolled away. Many generations of millions on millions have led an animal life, and fallen, with the beasts, into the grave. Some spiritual life has kept the world from growing quite cold; and, beside this, there is hope of redemption. The promise given in Eden is on record yet. But why is it not fulfilled?

Again, I leave this little, lower world. I pass Venus, pass Mercury, pass the Sun, pass the orbit of Mercury again, and of Venus, and of the Earth, and of Mars, and of the Asteroids, and of Jupiter, and Saturn, and Uranus; pass other systems, thousands on thousands, still tending to the centre and balance of the universe. I reach Heaven. I see the angel of the Lord again, with a farewell suffusion in his eyes, but a smile of joy on his lips. Though in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, and with the whole host of glory in adoring homage before him, there is something nearer and dearer to his heart than all the grandeur of his filial estate. His promise is the brightest jewel in his breast-plate; and is only excelled by the love which burns behind it. He sees from the throne what no other vision can discern, the humble dwelling-place of man. And the appointed time is near for advent and

sacrifice. Solemnity, such as was never felt before, oppresses heaven. In the universal stillness, if a single harp-string should snap, the sound would jar the throne. He alone may break such silence. I hear his voice divine. All orders are permitted to attend him. When they approach the earth, order after order is to descend and ascend, offering him worship—but quietly and unseen. One company only, the sons of God, with Michael, the archangel of power, at their head, may announce his coming to a few shepherds. Another, the morning stars, with Gabriel, the archangel of wisdom, at their head, may lead a few sages to his presence by the light of a single star.

I wait not to witness the solitude of heaven, but rather leave the procession to complete its arrangements, and hasten again to the earth.

The world is at peace. The decree of a Roman prince is abroad in Judea. The people are gathering together in the cities to which they belong. I repair to Bethlehem. Though the least of the cities of Judah, it is honored as the birth-place of David, and cherished as the chosen of David's greater son. Already it is crowded. Every street, and court, and roof, and the hill-side around is thronged. I look upon its multitude, and think—Oh how will they feel when the coming Messiah, advancing beyond his invisible host, shall shine on their towers, and alight in their midst! The sun sets. The cool of the evening causes the throng to retire to their shelter. The twilight lingers about the gates.

I pass through. I seek a rest at the inn. It is full. I hear of two strangers who have spent several days in the stable. If good enough for them, it is good enough for me. I enter the same retreat. I find it full of parental solicitude. The noble countenance of the man is softened with a heart full of tenderness. The pale face of the young mother is inexpressibly serene, with a holy and wonderful beauty. Her bed is but straw; and in a manger,

laid close beside her, sleeps her babe, but a few hours old. Young as it is, that babe has a heavenly smile; but the mother is still the most attractive. There is a dignity in her mien that awes me, and a spirit which it seems as if nothing could surprise or overcome. Yet, as she bends her calm eyes on her smiling son, she wears a look of devotion and praise.

I soon learn their story. They have come from Nazareth, from the hills of Galilee, overlooking the plain of Esdrelon; by Tabor and Gilboa, and the mountains of Samaria; between Ebal and Gerizim; by Jacob's well; and by Jerusalem—a long and weary way. And now, though both of the lineage of David, and in the city of their renowned ancestor, and under circumstances of so much interest, they are happy to find a refuge from the careless crowd around them among the beasts of the stall.

But who are these? Shepherds! whence do ye come? They answer not; but kneel by the manger, and worship the babe! They rise with his heavenly smile reflected in their own. They tell of a visit of angels; first one, then many, with visions of glory and chantings of praise and peace. I tremble with fear. Where, then, is the angel of the Lord? While yet the night lingers, other footsteps draw near. Sages! who and whence are ye? They answer not. Like Moses, they take off their sandals, breathing only—This is holy ground! They, too, kneel by the manger, and worship the babe. With tears in their eyes, they spread their gifts before him—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. They, also, rise, with their tears turned into smiles. They tell how a star brought them from their far-off homes. I tremble more and more. What means this worship of the stranger's babe, and where yet is the angel of the Lord? I step forth from the stable. I listen. All is still. The inn is hushed. The halls around are all hushed. I look up. I see the new star sparkling in the middle air, right over the stable. My natural vision seems clear as ever; but my

spiritual vision has been dim ever since I saw the suffused countenance of the angel of the Lord, preparing to leave the throne of the universe. To think that he should make such a sacrifice as to stoop to the earth for a kingdom, and resign the government of angels for the redemption of men, was more than my spirit could bear. But still less can I bear the burden of this mystery. Has he come? Where, then, does he hide the greatness of his power? God of the servant of thy servant Elisha, open thou mine eyes!

My vision returns. That light! See! Why it shines on the forehead of Gabriel, standing on his watch as he stood erewhile at the throne! Lo! The morning stars are arrayed beside him, and extend their train far behind him. Lo! Michael stands opposite, with all the sons of God in their purple robes and royal breast-plates. Behold! how, between their ranks, order after order of the whole heavenly host descend and ascend, to worship the babe. I tremble still; but doubt no more. I sink by the manger, and thrill while I see that the same suffused light, and the same glad smile that were blended in the countenance of the angel of the Lord, gleams in the eye and glows on the lips of the infant Jesus!

“Sweetest name on mortal’s tongue,  
Sweetest note in angel’s song,  
Sweetest carol ever sung,  
JESUS! JESUS!”

Yet, was it not sacrifice enough to exchange the throne of heaven for the throne of earth? Why this deeper humiliation? How shall he rise now? Earthly sovereignty is divided. A thousand petty princes sway their sceptres here. How shall he reach even the palace of Zion? And if this be hard, how shall he displace Cæsar, and win the supremacy of the world?

I see him as a boy; wise indeed, and pure, but self-abased and gentle.

I see him as a man; wonderful in word and mighty in miracle, but still meek and lowly in heart, the companion of fishermen and publicans, outcast and poor; a citizen, but without a penny for tribute; weary, but without a spot to lay his head; hungry, and without a morsel of food. I see him opposed by demons; assailed by jealous and blood-thirsty men; betrayed by one of his cherished friends; conducted, with every method of insult, through a mock trial; condemned, without the shadow of guilt, to the vilest and most painful of all modes of execution; and led forth, without a murmur of complaint or an effort of resistance, bearing his cross, through a jeering mob, to the place of skulls.

Again, I am confounded. What means this strange submission? Will there be a change presently, like that between the throne whence he came, and the manger where he lay? Will Calvary, as soon as his feet touch it, tower above Zion and Moriah? Will the cross be turned into a shining seat of imperial power? Will the patriarchs and prophets be summoned from their graves, that he may reign in the midst of his ancients gloriously? Will his enemies wither in his glance, and shrivel in the wrath of his frown? Will all cities throw open their gates, and all princes come down from their thrones, and all nations send ambassadors in haste to conciliate his majesty with homage and praise?

I see him step on Calvary, and not an atom trembles. I see him nailed to the wood. I see his upward look of pitying love, and hear his prayer—"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" I see him hanging, faint, in the noon-day darkness. I hear his last cry—"It is finished!"—and see his head fall upon his bosom in death!

Sudden as the shock of the earthquake, my soul thrills with the truth. Quick as the rending of the vail of the temple, the veil upon my mind is parted, and the glory of God shines in upon it.

I see that there was *one* sacrifice too great for Christ to

make! He was willing to leave the throne of the universe for the manger of Bethlehem; willing to grow up as the son of a poor carpenter; willing to be called the friend of publicans and sinners; willing to be watched with jealous eyes, and slandered by lying tongues, and hated by murderous hearts, and betrayed by friendly hands, and denied by pledged lips, and rejected by apostate priests, and a deluded populace, and cowardly princes; willing to be sentenced to the cross, and to carry the cross, and be nailed to the cross, and bleed, and groan, and thirst, and die on the cross. But he was *not* willing to wear an earthly crown, or robe, or wield an earthly sceptre, or exercise earthly rule. *That* would have been too great a sacrifice! He did, indeed, endure the crown of thorns, and the cast-off purple, and the reed, and the cry—"Hail! king of the Jews!" But this was merely because he *preferred* the mockery to the reality; so pouring infinite contempt on the one, not only by rejecting it in the beginning of his ministry, but, also, by accepting the other at its close.

A godlike sacrifice! I see it. I see it. The blood of Christ was an atonement for the sins of the world! "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed!"

I see it. His burial hallowed the tomb; the breaking of the seal on his sepulchre, was the breaking of the seal on every sepulchre; the ascension of his humanity to heaven is the warrant of our own ascension; and its entire and eternal perfection, exalted as it is, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," is the assurance of our own perfection, in all the honors of joint-heirship with him, in the many-mansioned house of his Father, where he has gone "to prepare a place" for us.

I look on heaven again. Instead of the angel of the Lord, I see by the throne of the universe, Jesus, the babe of Bethlehem, the boy of Nazareth, the man of Calvary!

“While, long returned, the angels round him sing,  
And saints, yet coming, shout to see their king!”

The saints! Who are they? “The spirits of the just made perfect”—redeemed from the earth! They who have “come up through much tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” They who, in imitation of their Lord and Master, quickened into spiritual life, have cherished and manifested a readiness to sacrifice fame, rank, office, power, wealth, pleasure, ease, time, health, life—everything but righteousness—for the one great cause of man’s redemption!

Patriarchs! Prophets! Apostles! Martyrs! Confessors! Reformers! and millions of humble names scarce ever heard on earth beyond the hearth-stone of love, the threshold of home, and the courts of the house of the Lord, there unite with the first-born sons of glory in giving praise “to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever!”

I see an immense multitude preparing around me, for the same transit:

“They all of sin were dupes and slaves,  
And rushing blind toward hopeless graves.  
Then blew the trumpet of God’s word!  
Then flashed the Spirit’s two-edged sword!  
They burst their bonds, their freedom won,  
And now toward heaven are marching on!”

We are enrolled with them. We are pledged to the whole campaign! What though our foes are many? What though they are mighty? “Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world!” “Through Christ we can do all things.” This is the victory that overcometh the world—even our faith! “All things are possible to him that be-



lieveth!" We can run through a troop, we can leap over a wall. "One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight!" Let the mightiest array be marshalled against us that ever was mustered by the Prince of Darkness, we fear not to meet them. Our friends are beyond them. Our kindred are beyond them. The saints are all beyond them. The angels are all beyond them. Christ is beyond them. God is beyond them. Heaven and eternal life are beyond them. And we will break through them. Shoulder to shoulder, foot to foot, heart with heart, hand with hand, with our shields lapped and our swords ready, we will press and cut our way to glory!

The spirit of Abraham is in us. The spirit of Moses is in us. The spirit of Elijah is in us. The spirit of Paul is in us. The spirit of Luther is in us. The spirit of Wesley is in us. Like them, we are ready to give up all for Christ. Nay, the spirit of Christ is in us, and like him, we are ready even to be crucified for the cause!

It is well, brethren and friends, to be confident in the Lord—to be able to say, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But, it is still better to be actually "faithful unto death," and then to be able to say—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

"GLORY TO GOD!"

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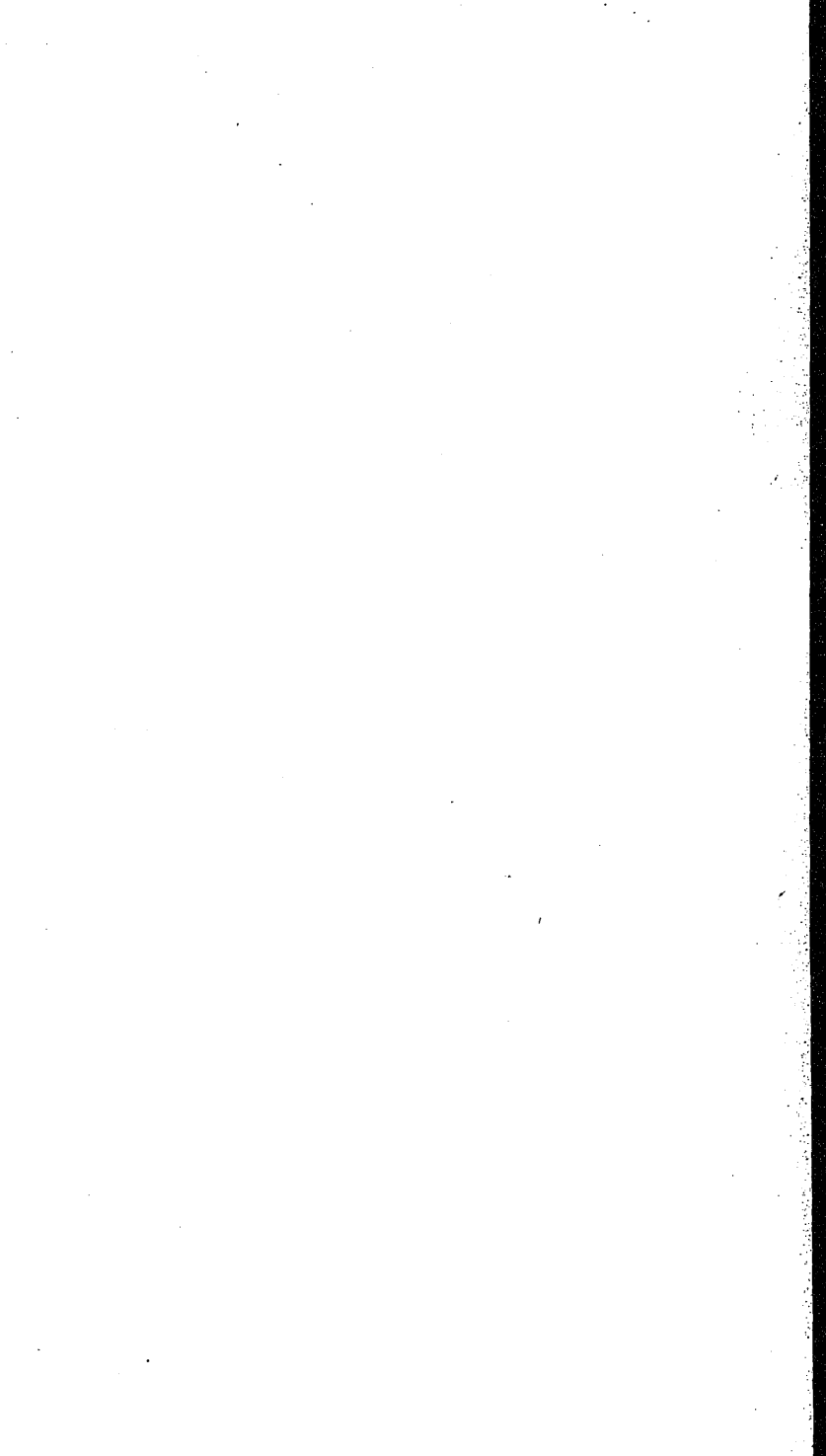
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